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BARON STEUBEN

AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY

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ISRAEL PUTNAM

By

OLIVER W. B. PEABODY

BARON STEUBEN

By

FRANCIS BOWEN

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LIFE
OF
ISRAEL PUTNAM
BY
OLIVER W. B. PEABODY

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

CHAPTER I.

His Birth and Education. — Becomes a practical Farmer. — Singular Adventure in killing a Wolf. — Enters the Army as Captain of a Company of Rangers. — Engages in the War against the French and Indians on the Canada Frontiers.

OUR history, from its beginning until a comparatively recent time, gives us abundant instances of men, in whom the deficiencies of education have been supplied by natural resource and energy. Thrown into novel situations, where instruction and experience would sometimes have availed them little, they have yet accomplished all that any exigency could require. Some of them were called to lay the foundations of civil institutions in the wilderness ; some to subdue a fierce and unrelenting savage foe ; some to encounter the hostility of other nations, as well as of that which they regarded as their own. Privation and suffering, in

every form in which they commonly exhaust the frame and overcome the spirit, were to attend them often by the fireside; and always in the engagements of life. These evils, if evils they were which led to immortality, were encountered with manly and heroic firmness; and it must needs be, that the personal history of men, exhibiting the vigor and flexibility of character required by the circumstances in which they were thus placed, should be full of freshness and diversity. Without pretending to claim for General Putnam the very highest rank among such individuals, we may yet venture to assign him an honorable place. His biography has been already written by a friend and fellow-soldier, who gathered from his own lips a portion of his history;* and we shall freely avail ourselves of the materials, which have been thus collected, in connexion with such as have been gained from other sources, in attempting to present a sketch of the life of one, who stands forward as a prominent example of some of the most striking traits of the genuine American character.

ISRAEL PUTNAM was born at Salem, in Massachusetts, on the 7th day of January, 1718. His grandfather with two brothers emigrated from the

*"An Essay on the Life of Major-General Israel Putnam; addressed to the State Society of the Cincinnati in Connecticut. By DAVID HUMPHREYS."

South of England, and was one of the earliest settlers of that ancient town. His father was a farmer, and the son was destined to the same pursuit, for which no great extent of education was then believed to be required. The arts of reading, writing, and a tolerable proficiency in arithmetic, were the only attainments to be acquired in the common schools ; and the higher institutions, or "the schools of the prophets," as they were called, were appropriated to the candidates for the liberal professions. We should be slow to censure our ancestors for this, before we ascertain how far the state of the fact is altered at the present day ; for their efforts in the cause of education, considering their circumstances and condition, have not yet been excelled by any of their sons.

It is plain, then, that the literary advantages of young Putnam could not be very great ; and, such as they were, it is not likely that this species of improvement was uppermost in his mind. His constitution of body was firm and vigorous ; and he early displayed that insensibility to danger, which was so strikingly exhibited in his subsequent career. It was the custom of the young men of that day to pursue athletic exercises, of which running, leaping, wrestling, and pitching the bar were the favorite ones, and were regarded as the surest tests of strength and skill ; and in these

manly sports, which have fallen of late into almost entire neglect, young Putnam was surpassed by none of his competitors. But the research of his biographers has redeemed from oblivion scarcely a single incident in the youthful history of one, then quite unknown to fame ; and the exploits of childhood are rarely of sufficient moment to compensate for the labor of inquiry. There is one, however, characteristic enough to deserve a passing notice. On Putnam's first visit to Boston, he was treated by a boy of the metropolis with the sort of courtesy, with which rustic boys are not unfrequently welcomed. His antagonist was twice as old and large as himself ; but he requited the attention with a sound beating, to the entire satisfaction of a numerous body of spectators.

In the twenty-first year of his age, Mr. Putnam was united in marriage to the daughter of Mr. John Pope, of Salem. After her death, which occurred in 1764, he married a Mrs. Gardiner, who died in 1777. About the time of his first marriage he removed to Pomfret in Connecticut, where he purchased a tract of land, and entered upon the occupation of a farmer. At first he met with some of the discouragements, which are apt to render the life of a settler a school of no gentle discipline ; but in the course of a few years he became an enterprising and successful cultivator, and was rewarded by a fair measure of prosper-

ity. In this quiet retreat he remained till the opening of the Seven Years' War presented him with a broader field of action.

It would be quite unpardonable, in writing the life of Putnam, to omit to notice his victory over the she-wolf, at Pomfret; the story of which is familiarly known to every schoolboy in the country, and is very minutely detailed by his principal biographer. This renowned animal had for some years been the scourge and terror of the farmers, whose pursuit of her had been altogether fruitless; though they had succeeded in destroying her young, whom she brought in winter with her from the forest, to bring up in her own arts of marauding. In an evil hour for her own safety, she made an onset upon Putnam's farm-yard. Seventy of his sheep and goats were killed, and many others wounded, in the course of a single night; and it was determined to resort to decisive measures. Several of the farmers, among whom was Putnam, accordingly entered into an offensive alliance against the common enemy; the condition of the compact being, that the pursuit should only cease with the destruction of the foe.

Fortunately her track was easily recognised, a portion of one of her feet having been lost by an accidental intimacy with a trap. Her pursuers were thus enabled to trace her course to Connecticut River, and thence back again to Pomfret,

where she took refuge in a cavern, near the residence of Putnam. The place was selected with great judgment to withstand a siege ; as very few persons beside Putnam himself could have been persuaded to reconnoitre the position of its inmate. It is entered by an aperture about two feet square, on the side of a huge ledge of rock. The pathway descends fifteen feet obliquely from the entrance, then pursues a horizontal direction for ten feet, and thence ascends gradually about fifteen feet to its extremity ; being in no part wider than three feet, nor high enough to permit a man to stand upright. The access to the interior is rendered very difficult in winter, by the accumulation of ice and snow.

No time was lost by the confederates in devising various methods of attack. A competent force of dogs was collected, with such munitions as were thought suited to this novel warfare. But the hounds that entered the cave retired in great disgust, and could not be prevailed on to repeat the experiment ; the smoke of blazing straw was ineffectual ; and the fumes of burning brimstone, which were expected to prove quite irresistible, wasted their sweetness in vain. This system of annoyance was continued through the day, until a late hour in the evening, when Putnam, weary of the unsuccessful efforts, endeavored to persuade his negro servant to go into the cave ; a propo-

sition which was declined; and his master, after somewhat unreasonably reproaching him with cowardice, resolved, against the earnest remonstrance of his neighbors, to undertake the enterprise himself.

He first procured some birch bark, to light his way and intimidate the wolf by its flame; then threw aside his coat and vest; and, causing a rope to be secured to his legs, by which he might be drawn out at a concerted signal, set fire to his torch and groped his way into the cavern. At the extremity he saw the wolf, who welcomed her unexpected visitor with an ominous growl. His examination being now completed, he gave the appointed signal; and his companions, supposing from the sounds within that the case must be an urgent one, drew him out so precipitately, that his clothes were torn to rags, and his body sorely lacerated.

He now provided himself with a musket, and bearing it in one hand and a lighted torch in the other, proceeded a second time upon his perilous adventure till he drew near the wolf. Just as she was on the point of springing, he took deliberate aim and fired; then, stunned by the explosion and almost suffocated by the smoke, he was again drawn out as before. After a brief interval, he entered the cavern for the third time, applied his torch to the wolf's nose to satisfy himself that her

repose was not affected, and, seizing her by the ears, was drawn forth with his prize, to the infinite satisfaction of the party.

This story is not without value, as an illustration of its hero's character. The life of a New England farmer is not usually very fruitful of adventure ; nor is there any other incident on record relating to Putnam before the time, when he exchanged his occupation for a less pacific one. One may readily conjecture, that the tranquil pursuits of agriculture could hardly satisfy the ambition of a spirit like his, always most at home in the midst of perilous adventures ; and that he must have exulted in the opportunities of acquiring fame and honors, which were afforded by the opening of the great French war, in 1754.

The causes of this eventful struggle belong too closely to the province of history to be required to be stated here. There was a general disposition among the people to prepare for some decisive measures in the following spring. It was with this view, that the memorable plan of the union of the Colonies was projected and matured ; but as this, from various causes, proved ineffectual, the arrangements for the campaign were not completed until the arrival of General Braddock in this country, early in 1755. A convention of the several governors was held at his suggestion early in the year, by which it was resolved that three indepen

dent expeditions should be undertaken. The first was destined against Fort Duquesne, and was conducted by General Braddock in person ; the second, at the head of which was Governor Shirley, against Forts Niagara and Frontenac ; and the reduction of Crown Point was the object of the third, which was composed wholly of colonial troops, under the command of Sir William Johnson. A body of troops was to be levied in Connecticut to serve in this last expedition, and the command of one of the companies composing it was bestowed on Mr. Putnam. His personal popularity rendered it easy for him to obtain the best recruits, and the regiment with which he was connected joined the army, near Crown Point, at the beginning of the campaign.

Throughout the war, very important services were rendered by the various corps, distinguished by the name of Rangers. They acted independently of the line of the army, and were employed in executing many perilous duties ; reconnoitring the positions of the enemy, serving in the capacity of guides, surprising detached parties, and obtaining prisoners, in order to gain intelligence, by force or stratagem. Among the other offices they were expected to perform, were those of destroying the houses, barns, barracks, and bateaux of the French, killing their cattle, and way-laying their convoys of provisions. They ren-

dered the most valuable aid as scouting parties to watch the movements of the enemy, of which no accurate intelligence could be procured but with the greatest hazard, the country being full of wandering and hostile Indians.

It is obvious, that a mode of life like this required the utmost prudence, sagacity, and alertness, and must have afforded abundant opportunities for wild and difficult adventure. In the Journals * of Major Rogers, the celebrated New

* The first part of this work, which purports to contain an account of the "several excursions made by the author under the generals who commanded upon the continent of North America during the late war," was printed in London in 1765. It presents rather copious sketches of the personal services of the writer, though with less reference to the general operations of the several campaigns, than the reader at this day could desire; but it is by no means destitute of interest; and a work can hardly be regarded as a fair subject of criticism, which was written "not with science and leisure, but in deserts, on rocks and mountains, amidst the hurries, disorders, and noise of war, and under that depression of spirits, which is the natural consequence of exhausting fatigue." Very few notices are to be found in it, at any length, of the prominent individuals, who acted in concert with Major Rogers; the name of Putnam is rarely mentioned, and never with any comment indicating that the least importance was attached by the author to his services. The trifling incident of the preservation of his life by Putnam, is not once alluded to.

A work, published in 1831, in Concord, New Hamp-

Hampshire partisan, are preserved the regulations drawn up by himself for the government of the Rangers under his command; and one needs only read them to be convinced, that it was a service in which only the bold and resolute could be expected to engage. We are not informed whether the corps of Putnam were known from the outset as Rangers; it is very probable that they were so; as they were employed almost exclusively in that capacity, and appear to have been soon distinguished by that name. No service could have been better suited to the character and taste of Putnam.

The campaign of 1755, though distinguished by the stain upon the British arms at Braddock's overthrow, and the victory of the Provincials over Dieskau near Lake George, was not a long one, and afforded less than usual scope for the exertions of the Rangers. A similarity in some respects of

shire, and entitled "Reminiscences of the French War," purports to contain among other matter, this Journal of Rogers; but the editor, without apprizing his readers of the fact, has mutilated the original in a very remarkable manner. Hardly a single sentence is unaltered, and it is quite curious to compare a page of Rogers' own composition with one which has undergone the scalping-knife of the New Hampshire editor. We doubt whether the proceeding is to be justified under any circumstances; but it becomes unpardonable when it is attempted without the slightest intimation to the reader.

character and disposition produced an intimacy between Putnam and Rogers ; and they frequently acted in concert to reconnoitre the positions of the enemy, surprise their advanced pickets, and obtain intelligence of their purposes and movements.

In one of their excursions, it was the fortune of Putnam to preserve the life of Rogers. Both these officers had been detached with a party of light troops from Fort Edward, to ascertain the state of the fortifications at Crown Point. To approach them with their whole force would have made it difficult to guard against discovery, while the number of straggling Indians in the neighborhood rendered it scarcely less dangerous to advance without support. They, however, left their men concealed behind a willow thicket, and went themselves sufficiently near the works to procure the information they desired. It was now about the hour of sunrise, when the soldiers began to issue in such numbers from the fort, that the partisans found no opportunity to rejoin their men without detection. In the course of an hour or two, a soldier came directly to the spot where Rogers lay concealed at a little distance from Putnam, and, on discovering him, called for aid to an adjacent guard, attempting at the same time to seize Rogers's fusee with one hand, and to stab him with a dirk which he held in the other. Putnam perceived the imminent danger of his associate,

and, being unwilling to alarm the enemy by firing, ran up, and struck the Frenchman dead before him with a single blow from his fusée. The outcry of the soldier had already alarmed the guard; but the partisans succeeded in rejoining their troop, and in returning without loss to their encampment.

By the terms of their enlistment, the colonial troops were engaged to serve only during the campaign; but the commission of Captain Putnam was renewed, and he entered again on duty in the spring of 1756. The general military operations of this year were less fortunate than those of the preceding one. The advantage of many expensive and laborious preparations was wholly lost by the inaction of the British generals. Oswego, an important fortress, was captured by the French, and no attempt was made to dispossess them of their outpost at Ticonderoga. A very different result would probably have been exhibited, had the operations of the army been conducted by Provincial officers, who were thoroughly conversant with the country, and the foe with whom they would have had to deal; points, of which the British generals appear to have been profoundly ignorant. It is a relief to turn from the detail of their misconduct, to the personal adventures of the more deserving officers, who acted under them.

Captain Putnam was directed to reconnoître

the position of the enemy at the Ovens, near Ticonderoga. He was accompanied in this enterprise by Lieutenant Robert Durkee, a gallant officer, who afterwards encountered the severest fate, under which humanity can ever be called to suffer.* The two partisans proceeded on their way, until they came near the enemy. It was the custom of the British and Provincial troops to set fires by night in a circle round their camp. The French, on the contrary, more wisely placed them in the centre, so that their sentinels were screened from observation by the darkness.

Putnam and Durkee were unfortunately not aware of this usage, and were creeping slowly on their hands and knees, in order to approach the fires, when they were confounded at finding themselves in the midst of the camp of the enemy, by whom they were discovered and fired upon. Durkee received a bullet in his thigh; but there was no time to be lost, and they began an expeditious retreat. Putnam led the way, and in a few minutes fell head foremost into a clay-pit, followed by Durkee, who had kept closely at his heels. Supposing his companion in the pit to be one of

* He was an officer in the revolution. At the battle of Wyoming, in 1778, he was wounded and made prisoner by the Indians; by whom he was burned at the stake, and treated during his expiring moments with the most savage cruelty.

the pursuers, Putnam had raised his arm to stab him, when he recognised Durkee's voice. Both then rushed from their retreat, in the midst of a shower of random bullets, and threw themselves behind a log, where they spent the remainder of the night. On examining his canteen, Putnam found it pierced with balls, and its contents entirely gone; and next morning at day-light, he discovered that his blanket was sorely rent by fourteen bullet-holes.

On another occasion, a convoy of baggage and provisions was intercepted by six hundred of the enemy at Halfway Brook, between Fort Edward and Lake George. The plunderers retreated with their booty, having experienced little interruption from the troops, by which the convoy was escorted. When the news of this disaster was received at the camp, Captains Putnam and Rogers were ordered in pursuit. They were directed to take with them one hundred men in boats, furnished with two wall-pieces, and the same number of blunderbusses. With these they were to proceed for a certain distance down Lake George, and thence over land to the Narrows, to cut off the enemy's retreat.

Shortly after they had reached the designated spot, they saw from their place of concealment the French batteaux, laden with the plunder of the convoy, sailing into the Narrows, entirely unsuspecting of danger. They await in silence the

approach of the batteaux ; at the critical moment, they pour upon them a close and most destructive fire ; many of the boatmen fall, and several of the batteaux are sunk. A strong wind sweeps the remainder with great rapidity through the passage into South Bay, or the destruction would have been complete. They carry to Ticonderoga the news of their disaster, and a detachment is instantly sent to intercept the Provincials ; who, anticipating such a movement, have in the mean time hurried to their boats, which they reach before the close of day.

Next morning they set sail, and, at Sabbath-day Point, meet the detachment of the French, consisting of three hundred men, advancing in boats with the expectation of an easy victory. Not a musket is discharged until they come within pistol shot ; then the enemy are thrown at once into confusion by the artillery, aided by a close fire of musketry. The carnage becomes dreadful ; of twenty Indians in one of the canoes, fifteen are killed, and very many are seen to fall overboard from others ; while, on the side of the Provinc'als, only one is killed and two others are wounded. No farther attempt is made to obstruct the retreat of the Provincials, who return in safety to the camp.

Late in the same season, General Webb, who commanded at Fort Edward, sent out Captain

Putnam to procure a prisoner ; the usual and very compendious method of learning on the best authority the motions of the enemy. He concealed his men near the highway leading from Ticonderoga to the Ovens ; but these valiant gentlemen thought fit to ascribe his caution to the influence of fear, and, as there was no enemy in sight, were with much difficulty induced to remain under shelter. Presently an Indian passed by, and at a little distance behind him a Frenchman ; and Putnam, calling on his men to follow, sprang to seize upon the latter, overtook him and ordered him to surrender. His men were now convinced of the advantage of concealment, and disregarded his order ; and, as Putnam was the only person in view, his intended captive preferred to run the hazard of resisting him. Putnam levelled his piece, but it missed fire, and he retreated followed by the Frenchman, in the direction where his men were posted ; but the other, falling on this unexpected ambuscade, changed his course without delay, and effected his escape. The men, whose conduct had been thus discreditable, were dismissed with disgrace ; and Putnam soon accomplished his object with other aid. The incident is worthy of relation, only as it shows the nature of the tasks imposed upon an active partisan, and the hazard to be encountered in performing them.

The character and services of Putnam had now become generally known ; he was found to unite with a total insensibility to danger, a caution and sagacity, which gave him the command of his resources at the moment when they were most required. Nor could any service be better adapted to the exhibition of these qualities, than that in which he was engaged ; though it was unfortunately in a sphere too limited, to secure for him a place in history. He was endeared to the soldiers by the cheerfulness with which he shared their perils and privations, and the gallantry, which suffered none to go where he did not himself lead the way ; to his superior officers, by the energy and promptness with which he executed their commands ; and he began to rise in the esteem of the public generally, as one who was destined to become distinguished in a broader field of action

CHAPTER II.

Raised to the Rank of Major. — Various Adventures in the War. — Capture of Fort William Henry. — Putnam stationed near Fort Edward. — Encounters the Enemy at South Bay. — Expedition against Ticonderoga. — Death of Lord Howe.

IN 1757, the legislature of Connecticut conferred on Putnam the commission of a major. The Earl of Loudoun, one of the most incompetent British generals who had commanded in the colonies, was then at the head of the military forces in this country. He had arrived at Albany in the summer of the preceding year; but the capture of Oswego by the French had induced him to suspend offensive operations, and to think only of guarding against further loss. By the next spring, the generous efforts of the colonists enabled him to take the field with a numerous and effective force; and it was expected, not without reason, that he should open the campaign in the direction of Canada with some decisive blow. But the people were not yet fully acquainted with the character of their military chief. About midsummer, they were somewhat surprised to learn that he had

sailed for Halifax with six thousand of his troops. It was his intention there to join a reinforcement of five thousand men, who had lately arrived from England under the command of Lord Howe, and to attempt the reduction of Louisburg in Cape Breton; but, learning that the garrison of that place had been augmented by an armament from France, he returned to New York and reposed upon his laurels.

While the British commander was prosecuting his voyage of discovery, the condition of Fort William Henry, then a frontier post, was such as to invite the assault of the enemy. This ill-fated fortress, the name of which still awakens melancholy recollections, was situated at the southwestern extremity of Lake George. It was a structure of no great strength, on a small eminence, which rose gradually from the waters of the lake. Its garrison at this time consisted of about three thousand men; and, as an additional security, General Webb was stationed about fifteen miles distant at Fort Edward, with a force considerably larger.

The Marquis de Montcalm, the French commander, having collected about eight or nine thousand men, including a large body of Indians, appeared before Fort William Henry on the third of August, with a summons to surrender. In his letter to the commanding officer of the garrison, he urged the capitulation by considerations of human

ity, declaring that his power to restrain the **In-**dians would be lost, after the blood of any of them should be shed. No written answer was given to the summons; a verbal reply was returned by the bearer, that the fort would be defended to the last extremity.

Another sad illustration was yet to be afforded of the incapacity of generals, and a still more melancholy one of the atrocities of savage warfare. Just before the siege began, General Webb, accompanied by Major Putnam and two hundred men, went to Fort William Henry, to ascertain the state of its defences. While the General was thus engaged, Major Putnam offered to go with five men to Northwest Bay, sending back the boats to prevent detection, and obtain accurate information respecting the situation of the French at Ticonderoga.

This proposition was rejected as too hazardous. He was, however, permitted to undertake the enterprise, with eighteen volunteers. They immediately embarked in three whale-boats, and set forward on their expedition. Before they arrived at Northwest Bay, a large body of the enemy was discovered on an island. Leaving two of his boats, as if for the purpose of fishing, Putnam returned with the remaining one to communicate what he had seen. The general, whose valor was his least shining accomplishment, seeing the Major

make for the land with his force thus reduced, despatched a skiff to him with orders to come to the shore alone.

With some difficulty, he obtained permission to return in quest of his companions, and to make additional discoveries. He found his men in the place where he had left them, and immediately after encountered a large number of boats in motion on the lake, from the foremost of which he was enabled to escape only by the superior fleetness of his own. There was no longer any room for doubt, that this armament was destined against Fort William Henry ; and Putnam so informed the General, who ordered him to preserve strict silence on the subject, and to exact an oath of secrecy from his men.

In vain he endeavored to urge the necessity of meeting the enemy on the shore. "What do you think we should do here?" was the discreet reply. Next morning, the general returned with his escort to Fort Edward, and detached a reinforcement to Fort William Henry. In twenty-four hours afterwards, the fortress was invested by the enemy.

During six days was it defended against a far superior force, provided with artillery. Express after express was in the mean time sent to Fort Edward for relief ; but, though the force of Webb had been increased by the addition of Johnson's

troops and the militia, he made not the slightest effort to avert its fate. Once, indeed, he yielded to the solicitations of Sir William Johnson, and permitted those, who would volunteer in the service, to march for its relief. The privilege was eagerly embraced by the Provincials, including Putnam's Rangers; but scarcely had they begun their march, when the general's heart failed him, and they were ordered back. They returned with tears of indignation and sorrow.

General Webb believed his duty sufficiently discharged when he wrote to Colonel Munroe, the commander of the fort, advising him to surrender; and it is a striking example of the danger of pusillanimity, that the indecision of this strangely inefficient personage was the direct cause of the subsequent disaster. When Putnam was a prisoner in Canada, he was assured by Montcalm himself, that the movement of the Provincials from Fort Edward had been reported to him by his Indian scouts, who represented them to be as numerous as the leaves upon the trees; that the operations of the siege were suspended, and preparations for retreat were immediately made, when the news of their return encouraged him to persevere with greater vigor.

All expectations of relief were now at an end; two of the largest guns of the fort had burst, and further resistance must be obviously unavailing;

articles of capitulation were therefore signed, by which protection against the Indians was pledged to the garrison, and they were to be permitted to march forth with the honors of war.

The event which followed, and which was long known throughout the continent as the Massacre of Fort William Henry, can hardly be recited now without a thrill of horror. The troops began their march from the fortress. Just as the rear-guard issued from the gates, the whole body of the Indians fell upon them with the utmost fury, slaughtering them in cold blood. Great numbers were killed, and others were taken prisoners. No efforts were made by the French to put an end to these atrocities; no protection, demanded alike by honor and humanity, was given, until only a miserable remnant of the garrison was left.

Early the next day, Putnam, who had been sent out with his Rangers to watch the movements of the enemy, reached the scene of carnage, just as the rear-guard of the French were embarking on the lake. The barracks were still burning, and hundreds of human bodies lay half-consumed among the ruins. Those of more than one hundred women were scattered around, torn and mutilated in a manner which no language is adequate to tell. One may conceive with what feelings the generous and warm-hearted soldier must have looked upon a scene like this. As we read the dark and bloody

tale, we almost pardon the stern vengeance with which our fathers strove to crush so merciless a foe ; but what a picture does it give of modern civilization, that the most enlightened nations hesitated not to employ these demons as the instruments of war ?

General Lyman soon after this took the command at Fort Edward, and labored to strengthen its defences. With this view he employed a party of one hundred and fifty men to procure timber in its neighborhood, and stationed Captain Little at the head of a morass, about a hundred rods eastward from the fort, to cover them. This post was connected with the fort by a tongue of land, on one side of which was a creek, and the morass extended on the other. One morning at day-break, a sentinel saw what he imagined to be birds, flying swiftly from the morass over his head ; but he was enlightened as to the true genus of these feathered messengers, when he saw an arrow quivering in a tree, just by him. A body of savages had concealed themselves in the morass in the hope of surprising the party, and had resorted to this noiseless method of despatching the sentinel.

The alarm was instantly given ; the laborers fled towards the fort, and were furiously attacked by the Indians ; but their progress was arrested by the close and seasonable fire of Little's party,

which enabled such of the fugitives as were not wounded to reach the fort in safety. The situation of the small band, pressed as they were by an overwhelming force, became very precarious; but the commander of the fort, instead of sending a detachment to their aid, ordered all the outposts to be called in and the gates to be closed.

Putnam was stationed with his Rangers on an island, near the fort, where intelligence soon reached him of the peril of Little and his party. Without the hesitation of an instant, they dashed into the water, and waded as rapidly as they could to the scene of action. On their way they passed so near the fort, that General Lyman called to them from the parapet, and ordered them peremptorily to return; but Putnam made a brief apology, and, without waiting to ascertain whether it was satisfactory, hurried on with his men.

In a few minutes they were at the side of the little band of regulars, who gallantly maintained their ground; then, at the command of Putnam, they rushed with loud huzzas upon the savages directly into the morass. The charge was completely successful; the Indians fled in every direction, and were pursued with great slaughter until night-fall. Colonel Humphreys remarks, that all is not right in the military system, when the orders of superior officers are disregarded with impunity, and intimates that Putnam should have been sub-

jected to the discipline of a court-martial. Nothing of the kind, however, appears to have been attempted ; the general was probably content with the result, and cared not that his own conduct should be contrasted with that of those, who served him contrary to his will.

In the winter of this year, the barracks adjacent to the northwestern bastion of Fort Edward accidentally took fire. Within twelve feet of them stood the magazine, containing three hundred barrels of powder. By the orders of Colonel Haviland, who then commanded at this post, some heavy pieces of artillery were brought to bear upon the barracks, to batter them to the ground, but without success. Putnam reached the fort from his station on the island, while the flames were spreading fiercely in the direction of the magazine, and took his post on the roof of the barrack, as nearly as possible to the blaze. A line of soldiers was formed through a postern to the river, from which water was conveyed to Putnam, who threw it on the fire, standing all the while so near it, that his mittens were burned from his hands. He was supplied with another pair soaked in water, and kept his post.

Colonel Haviland, considering his situation to be too dangerous, urged him to descend ; but he replied that a suspension of his efforts would be fatal, and entreated to be suffered to remain ; and

the colonel, encouraged by his intrepidity, gave orders that nothing more should be removed from the fort, exclaiming, that if they must perish, all should be blown up together. The barracks began to totter; Putnam came down and took his station between them and the magazine; the external planks of this building were consumed, and there remained only a partition of timber between the powder and the flames; still he refused to quit his post, and continued pouring on the water until the fire was happily subdued.

He had contended with the flames for an hour and a half; his face, his hands, and almost his whole body were blistered; and, in removing the mittens from his hands, the skin was torn off with them. Several weeks elapsed, before he recovered from the effects of the exposure; but he was rewarded by the earnest thanks of his commander, and by the consciousness that, but for him, the fortress must have been in ruins.

A brighter day began to dawn upon the British arms in every quarter of the country, but the neighborhood of Lake George and Lake Champlain. There, the same fortunes which had hitherto attended them underwent no immediate change. The popular voice had overborne the royal will, and had compelled George the Second to receive Mr. Pitt as his prime minister. The name of this great man is more closely associated with

commanding energy of character, than any other in the history of England ; it made, as, in the eloquent language of Burke, it kept the name of his country respectable in every other on the globe. Nowhere was that name held in greater respect, and nowhere did it inspire more confidence, than in America.

He assumed the direction of affairs in the summer of 1757 ; and his attention was at once directed to the conduct of the war in this country. The colonies, justly appreciating his vigor and talent, renewed their generous but exhausting efforts to recruit the army for the next campaign ; and the extent of their exertions can only be understood, when it is considered that fifteen thousand men were supplied by Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, at a time when the resources of all were hardly equal to those of any one of them now.

Three expeditions were proposed to be undertaken ; Louisburg was the destination of the first, Fort Duquesne of the second, and Crown Point and Ticonderoga of the third. The results of the two first are sufficiently well known ; the course of our narrative will lead us into some detail respecting the last. Not even the ability of Pitt could immediately turn the current of adverse fortune, which had been flowing with so little interruption in the region, where the scene of our story has thus far been laid.

General Abercromby, who now assumed the chief command in this department, ordered Major Putnam to proceed with fifty men to South Bay in Lake George, in order to watch the motions of the enemy, and intercept their straggling parties. The detachment marched to Wood Creek, near the point where it flows into South Bay ; there, in obedience to Putnam's directions, they constructed a parapet of stone, thirty feet in length, on a cliff that overhangs the water ; securing it from observation by young pines, so disposed that they appeared to have grown upon the spot. Fifteen of the soldiers, who became unfit for duty, were sent back from this station to the camp.

Late in the evening of the fourth day since he occupied the post, Major Putnam was informed that a large number of canoes, filled with men, were slowly entering the mouth of the creek. All the sentinels were called in, and each man was stationed at the point where his fire would be most effective, receiving positive orders from Putnam to reserve it, until he should give the word. The moon was at the full, and every movement of the enemy was perfectly in view. The most advanced canoes had passed the parapet, when a soldier accidentally struck his firelock against a stone. Alarmed at the sound, those in the foremost canoes ceased to advance, and the whole were crowded in a body at the very base of the temporary forti-

fication. The leaders consulted together, and apparently resolved to return into the Bay.

Just as they were changing their course, Putnam gave the word to fire, and it was obeyed with terrible effect ; hardly a shot failed to find its victim, amidst the dense mass of the enemy beneath, whose fire was wasted on an invisible foe. The carnage had continued for some time, when the enemy, perceiving from the fire that the number of their assailants must be small, detached a party to land below in order to surround them ; but the movement had been watched by Putnam, and the party was repulsed by twelve men, under the command of Lieutenant Durkee. During the whole night were the enemy exposed to the murderous fire from the parapet. At day-break, Putnam learned that a detachment had effected a landing at some distance below ; his ammunition also began to fail, and he gave the order to retreat.

It was afterwards ascertained, that the enemy consisted of a corps of five hundred men, commanded by the well-known partisan Molang ; and that more than half their number perished on that fatal night. Two only of Putnam's little band were wounded ; they were ordered to the camp under the escort of two other soldiers, but were pursued and overtaken by the Indians. Finding their own fate inevitable, they persuaded their escort to leave them, and quietly awaited the

approach of the foe. One of them, a provincial, whose thigh had been broken by a bullet, killed three of the savages by a single discharge of his musket. He was instantly put to death; but the other, an Indian, was made prisoner, and related these circumstances afterwards to Putnam, who encountered him in Canada.

While the party were effecting their retreat, they were fired on by an unexpected enemy. Putnam, who was never disconcerted, ordered his men to charge, when the leader of the other party, recognising his voice, cried out that they were friends. Friends or foes, replied Putnam, they deserved to perish for doing so little execution with so fair a shot; only one man had been wounded by the fire. Soon after, they were met by a corps detached to cover their retreat, and regained the fort on the following day.

The expedition against Ticonderoga, which has been already mentioned, was led by General Abercromby in person. His force consisted of sixteen thousand men, amply provided with artillery and military stores. On the morning of the 5th of July, 1758, they were embarked in batteaux, and began to descend Lake George, the whole array presenting a brilliant and imposing spectacle. They reached Sabbath-day Point at evening. Here they halted for a few hours, and then resumed their voyage, Lord Howe leading the van.

An officer, who had been sent to ascertain whether the proposed landing-place was unobstructed, returned at day-break with the information, that it was in possession of the enemy. Another place of landing was selected, and the troops were disembarked at mid-day on the 6th of July. Rogers advanced with his Rangers and drove the enemy before him, and the columns of the army began their march. Lord Howe led the centre, and Putnam was at his side. Some musketry was heard upon the left. "What means this firing?" said Lord Howe. "I know not, but with your Lordship's leave will ascertain," replied Putnam. He went, accompanied, in opposition to his earnest remonstrances, by Lord Howe with one hundred of the van. The firing proceeded from a portion of the advanced guard of the enemy, who had lost their way in the woods, while retreating before Rogers. They were soon encountered; and, at their first discharge, Lord Howe fell.

No heavier loss could well have been sustained. This young nobleman was in the prime of manhood, of fine address, full of amiable qualities, and eminent for manly virtue; his military fame was already high, and presented the most brilliant promise for the future. Never was a British officer so much endeared to the Provincial troops, or enjoyed more of the general esteem and confidence. He was regretted equally for what

he was, and what he was expected to become ; but the man, over whom the tears of a people are shed, cannot be said to have descended immaturity to the tomb.

His death was avenged by his troops, who charged the enemy, and drove them from the field. Having accomplished this, they were returning to the lines, when they were fired upon, on the supposition that they were of the French army. Several men were killed ; nor was the danger averted, until Putnam ran through the midst of the fire, explained the mistake, and thus secured his men from farther injury. He remained himself upon the field until evening, attending to the wounded French, and providing them with such alleviations as he had it in his power to bestow.*

“The fall of Lord Howe,” says Rogers in his Journal, “appeared to produce an almost general consternation and languor.” Certain it is, that from that hour the enterprise wholly ceased to prosper. No progress was made during the next

* Colonel Humphreys assures us, in his *Life of Putnam*, that Major Rogers was sent next morning to bring off the wounded prisoners ; “but, finding the wounded unable to help themselves, in order to save trouble, he despatched every one of them to the world of spirits.” We have no means of contradicting or confirming a story, which every reader would be glad to believe unfounded.

day ; but the principal engineer was sent forward to examine the defences of Ticonderoga ; he reported in favor of hazarding an attack without waiting to bring up the artillery, and the preparations were immediately made. This fortress stood on a peninsula in Lake Champlain, very near the shore ; and the French lines, which were defended by two redoubts and strong *abatis*, extended across the neck of the peninsula.

The garrison at this time consisted of six thousand men ; three thousand more, who had been detached to the Mohawk river, were hourly expected to return. On the morning of the 8th of July, the British troops advanced to the attack over a tract swept by the deadly fire of a sheltered enemy ; and were shot down by hundreds as they rushed forward to the *abatis*, and vainly labored to remove this fatal obstacle. Three times in the course of four hours, did they assault the works with unyielding resolution ; but their gallantry was wholly unavailing, and their officers at last put an end to this wanton sacrifice of life, and ordered them to retire.

About two thousand of the assailants perished in this rash attack, during the whole progress of which General Abercromby remained in safety two miles from the scene of action. Not a single piece of artillery was ordered up, and the assault was made precisely in the spot where the lines were best

defended. Even at the moment of their retreat, the English force was more than twice as great as that of the garrison ; the fortress might still have been reduced by a well-conducted siege ; but all further operations were at once abandoned. Major Putnam, who had been employed throughout the action in bringing up the provincial regiments, rendered great service in securing the retreat ; and, by the evening of the next day, the whole army had regained their camp at the south end of Lake George. The annals of even this war give no example of a more unfortunate or ill-conducted enterprise.

CHAPTER III.

Perilous Descent of the Rapids at Fort Miller.

— Battle with the Indians. — Putnam taken Prisoner and treated with great Cruelty. — Sent to Ticonderoga, and thence to Montreal. — Exchanged, and returns to the Army. — Colonel Schuyler. — Putnam is commissioned Lieutenant-Colonel. — Serves under General Amherst. — Takes part in the Expedition against Havana. — Engaged in an Enterprise against the Western Indians. — Retires from the Army after Ten Years' Service.

ONE day in the course of this summer, while Major Putnam was lying in a batteau with five men on the east side of the Hudson, near the Rapids by Fort Miller, he was suddenly warned from the opposite shore that the Indians were upon him. His batteau was at the head of the Rapids ; to remain or cross the river would be inevitably fatal. Before the batteau could be put in motion, the Indians opened their fire from the bank ; one man, who, being at a little distance from the rest, had been of necessity left behind, was instantly seized by them, and killed.

Without a moment's hesitation Putnam seized

the helm, and steered his batteau directly down the river; there was scarcely even a chance for escape; the current was broken into whirlpools and eddies, as it rushed furiously over shelves and among projecting rocks. Without any aid from his companions, who were aghast at the danger, he guided his boat, as it shot down, in the course which seemed least threatening, avoiding the rocks and stemming the eddies. Sometimes it was turned fairly round, again it sped onward with the fleetness of a dart; till, in a few minutes, it was gliding quietly over the smooth stream below.

“On witnessing this spectacle,” says Colonel Humphreys, “it is asserted that these rude sons of nature were affected with the same sort of superstitious veneration which the Europeans, in the dark ages, entertained for some of their most valorous companions. They deemed the man invulnerable, whom their balls on his pushing from the shore could not touch; and whom they had seen steering in safety down the Rapids that had never before been passed. They conceived it would be an affront against the Great Spirit to kill this favored mortal with powder and ball, if they should ever see and know him again.” It will be seen, however, that some of the race were not inclined to push these religious scruples so far, as to deny themselves the satisfaction of subjecting him to the ordeal of fire.

In the month of August, Major Putnam was deserted by the fortune which had hitherto attended him, and encountered some of the most remarkable of those perils, which give a character of romance to his personal history. A corps of five hundred men, under the command of Major Rogers and himself, was detached to watch the enemy in the neighborhood of Ticonderoga. When the party reached South Bay, it was separated into two divisions, which were stationed at a considerable distance from each other; but, being discovered by the enemy, it was deemed expedient to reunite them, and to return without delay to head-quarters at Fort Edward.

They were arranged for this purpose in three divisions. Rogers headed the right, Putnam the left, and the central one was led by Captain Dalzell. At the close of the first day's march, they halted on the borders of Clear River. Early the next morning, Major Rogers, with a strange disregard of those precautions to which the Rangers were so often indebted for security, amused himself by a trial of skill with a British officer, in firing at a mark; and this signal act of imprudence was followed by the loss of many lives.

Molang, the French partisan, had been sent out with five hundred men to intercept the party, and was at this moment lying scarce a mile from their encampment. The sound of the firing guided him

at once to their position ; and he posted his men in ambush along the outskirts of the forest, near the paths through which they were to pass. Soon after sunrise the Americans resumed their march through a thicket of shrubs and brushwood, over land from which the timber had been partially cleared some years before ; and, owing to the difficulty of forcing their way through these obstructions, they moved in close columns, Putnam leading the way, Dalzell being stationed in the centre, and Rogers in the rear. Just as they had traversed the thicket and were about to penetrate the forest, they were furiously attacked by the French and savages.

The assault, however unexpected, was sustained with gallantry and coolness ; Putnam ordered his men to halt, returned the fire, and called upon Dalzell and Rogers to support him. Dalzell came immediately up ; but Rogers, instead of advancing to the aid of his associates, stationed his men between the combatants and Wood Creek, in order, as he affirmed, to guard against an attack in the rear ; or, as was suspected by others, to relieve himself from the necessity of making one in an opposite direction. The action began to assume a desperate character. Putnam was determined to maintain his ground ; his soldiers, as occasion required, fought in ranks in the open spaces of the forest, or fired from behind the shelter of the trees.

But his own fusee chanced to miss fire, while he held its muzzle against the breast of an athletic savage; thus defenceless, he was compelled to surrender; and his antagonist, having bound him securely to a tree, returned to the battle.

Captain Dalzell, who now commanded, maintained the fight with signal intrepidity; but the Provincials were compelled to retreat for a little distance, closely followed by the savages, exulting in their fancied triumph, and rushing forward with shouts of victory. The Provincials rallied and drove them back beyond their former position, and the battle here grew warmer than before. The tree to which Putnam was secured was thus brought midway between the combatants, in the centre of the hottest fire of both; and he stood, wholly unable to move his body, or even to incline his head, in the midst of a shower of balls, of which many lodged in the tree above him, and several passed through the sleeves and skirts of his coat.

In this position, than which it would be difficult for the imagination to conceive one more appalling, he remained for more than an hour; each of the parties meanwhile giving ground several times in succession, but not so far as to place him beyond the field of contest. Once, when the Provincials had retired a little and the savages were near him, a young Indian amused himself by throwing his

tomahawk at the tree, apparently to ascertain how nearly he could cast it to the body of the prisoner, without striking him ; and the weapon more than once lodged in the tree, within a hair's breadth of the mark. When this barbarian grew weary of his sport, a French subaltern drew near, and levelled his musket at Putnam's breast. Fortunately it missed fire. It was in vain that the latter claimed the treatment due to him as a prisoner of war. The Frenchman, instead of desisting, pushed him violently with his musket, and after dealing him a severe blow upon the cheek with the but-end of his piece, left him to his fate.

After a long and gallant contest, the Provincials remained in possession of the field ; the enemy were routed with the loss of ninety of their number, and retired, taking with them their prisoner, who was destined to undergo still greater suffering.

When the Indians had retreated to a considerable distance from the field of the battle, they deprived Major Putnam of his coat, vest, stockings, and shoes, bound his hands tightly together, and piled the packs of a number of the wounded on his back. In this wretched condition, exhausted by fatigue, and severely suffering from the injuries he had received, he was forced to march for many miles through a mountainous and rugged tract ; until the party, overcome with weariness, at length halted to rest themselves. Meantime, the tight-

ness of the cords around his wrists had caused his hands to swell, and made them exquisitely painful ; the blood was flowing from his torn and naked feet ; the weight of his burden became intolerable to his exhausted frame ; and he entreated the savages to loose his hands or to release him from his sufferings by death.

A French officer interposed, removed the ligatures, and relieved him of a portion of his burden ; the Indian, who had made him captive and who had remained behind to attend to the wounded, also came up, provided him with moccasins, and expressed much indignation at the treatment which he had received ; but soon went back, without taking measures to secure him against its repetition.

A spot for the evening's encampment was selected, and the Indians, taking with them Major Putnam, went thither in advance of the rest of the party. On the way he experienced fresh outrages, and was deeply wounded on the cheek by a blow from a tomahawk. He had been thus far spared for a darker purpose ; it had been resolved that he should perish at the stake, with all those refinements of torture, by which the savages know how to enhance the bitterness of death. The depths of the forest were chosen as the scene of sacrifice. The victim was bound entirely naked to a tree ; large piles of fuel were laid in a circle around him ; and, while these fearful preparations

were in progress, they were rendered more appalling by the wild songs and exultation of the Indians.

When all was ready and their victim was awaiting the hour of death with the fortitude which never failed him, the fire was set to the fuel about him ; but a sudden shower extinguished the flames. After repeated efforts, the blaze began to rise from every portion of the circle. Putnam's hands were closely bound, but he was still able to move his body ; and his convulsive writhing to avoid the flame gave infinite diversion to his tormentors, who accompanied their orgies with songs and dances, and their usual terrific expressions of delight.

All hope of relief was now at an end, and nature was beginning to yield to the excess of suffering, when a French officer rushed through the throng, dashed aside the blazing brands, and cut the cords of the prisoner. A savage, touched by some sudden impulse of humanity, had hurried to inform Molang of the proceedings of his fellows, and it was this brave partisan himself, who had thus, at the last extremity, redeemed from the most horrible of deaths a gallant foe. After sternly reprimanding the Indians for their cruelty, he took Putnam under his protection, until he could restore him to his savage master.

The kindness of this master (for so the Indian

who captured Putnam was considered) bore some resemblance to the tender mercies of the wicked. He appeared to feel for the sufferings of his prisoner ; and, finding him unable to eat the hard bread set before him, in consequence of the injury inflicted by the Frenchman, moistened it with water for his relief. Apprehensive, however, that Putnam might take advantage of the darkness to escape, he removed his moccasins, and bound them to his wrists ; then placed him on the ground upon his back, and, extending his arms as far asunder as possible, secured them to two young trees. His legs were next secured in the same ingenious manner. Several long and slender poles were next cut, and laid, together with bushes, transversely across Putnam's body ; on the extremities of these lay several Indians, in such a manner that the slightest effort to escape must awaken them.

Having completed this singular cage, the Indians were content with the provision they had made for his safe-keeping ; and in this particularly inconvenient prison Putnam spent the dreary night that followed his release from death. He was accustomed to relate, that, even while thus reposing, he could not refrain from smiling as he thought of the odd subject for the canvass which was presented by the group, of which he constituted the most prominent figure ; but his merriment was probably of short duration.

Next morning he was released from durance and provided with a blanket; some bear's meat was given him to allay his hunger, and he was permitted to resume his march without a burden. Some vexation was occasionally shown by the savages, by menacing signs and gestures, on account of the loss of their expected entertainment; but they were no longer suffered to molest him, and he reached Ticonderoga the same night, without experiencing farther violence. On his arrival there he was placed in the custody of a French guard.

After having been examined by Montcalm, Major Putnam was transferred to Montreal. He was conducted thither by a French officer, from whom he received a courtesy and kindness which were the more welcome, from the indignities he had so lately suffered. Several American prisoners were in that city at the time; among the number was Colonel Peter Schuyler. When he heard of the arrival of Putnam, Colonel Schuyler hastened to ascertain the place of his abode. The Provincial Major had been suffered to remain without a coat, vest, or stockings; the remnant of his clothing was miserably tattered, and his body exhibited serious marks of the violence he had endured. Colonel Schuyler, when he came into his presence, was so affected by the sight, that he could hardly in the language of Humphreys, "contain his speech within limits consistent with

the prudence of a prisoner, and the meekness of a Christian."

He immediately supplied his countryman with all that his necessities required ; and, after securing to him, by the most active intercession, the treatment to which his rank entitled him, found means to render him a more important service. The capture of Frontenac by the British occasioned an exchange of prisoners, of which Putnam reaped the benefit by a stratagem of Colonel Schuyler. There were several officers among the prisoners, whose claim to be exchanged was superior to his ; and Schuyler, fearing that the opportunity might be lost if the character of the prisoner should be known, prevailed upon the Governor to permit him to name an officer to be included in the cartel. He then assured his Excellency, that he should name an old Provincial major, who was of no service there or elsewhere, but was very anxious to return to his wife and family, in preference to the young men, who had no families to care for.

There is another instance of the beneficence of Colonel Schuyler, not wholly unconnected with the object of this narrative. Mrs. Howe, the story of whose captivity by the Indians is familiar to American readers, was an inmate of his family in Montreal, at the time of which we speak. The first husband of this lady had been murdered by the Indians, several years before Mr. Howe, the

second, met with a similar fate at Fort Dummer, in 1756 ; and his wife, with seven children, was carried into captivity. They wandered for many months, exposed to the extremity of hardship and privation. Her two daughters were destined by the Indians to become the wives of two young warriors ; but this scheme was defeated by the address of their mother, who prevailed upon the French commander to procure them admission into a convent at Montreal. The sons, five in number, were distributed among various Indian tribes. She was herself ransomed from the Indians by an old French officer, from whose rude importunities, as well as those of his son, she found it difficult to escape.

She had heard of Colonel Schuyler, and found means to acquaint him with her story. With his usual generosity he immediately paid the price of her ransom, and thought his work of charity imperfectly accomplished, until all her sons were restored to her. It became necessary for him to return home before the other prisoners were ready for the journey ; and he recommended Mrs. Howe and her family to the charge of Major Putnam, with whom she returned in safety to her friends ; both having experienced a larger measure of suffering, than humanity is often called to undergo.

In 1759, a plan was formed for the entire expulsion of the French from their possessions on this continent. Three powerful armies were to

enter Canada by different routes ; General Wolfe was appointed to conduct an expedition up the St. Lawrence against Quebec ; General Amherst, after reducing Ticonderoga and Crown Point, was to join him under the walls of that city ; and a third army was destined against Fort Niagara. General Prideaux, the commander of the last, after reducing that fortress, was to attack Montreal, and, if successful, was to unite himself with the grand army at Quebec. This vast scheme was only partially accomplished before the close of the campaign.

The name and victory of Wolfe are familiar in the mouths of all as household words. Amherst succeeded in the reduction of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, but at so late a period as to prevent him from advancing into Canada ; the fortress of Niagara was also taken by Prideaux, but it was not thought prudent to hazard an attack on Montreal. Such was the general condition of affairs at the close of 1759. Putnam, who had been raised to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, accompanied the army of Amherst, and was employed during the latter part of the season in strengthening the defences of Crown Point ; but we have no means of giving any particular detail of his operations.

The next season, that of 1760, witnessed the termination of the war in this portion of America. Montreal was the only important post remaining

in possession of the French, whose whole force was concentrated in its neighborhood. General Amherst, the British commander-in-chief, had employed the winter in preparations to unite his forces under the walls of that city. With this view, General Murray was to advance upon it by water from Quebec; Colonel Haviland was to proceed thither from Crown Point by the way of Lake Champlain; while Amherst himself, at the head of an army of ten thousand men, was to enter the St. Lawrence by the way of Lake Ontario, and descend it to Montreal.

In falling down the river, the progress of the troops was arrested by two armed vessels near the mouth of the Oswegatchie, in a position which effectually prevented the British from attacking the fort of the same name in the vicinity. Lieutenant-Colonel Putnam's activity and resources were called into requisition to remove the obstacle; and he undertook, with one thousand men, in fifty batteaux, to carry the vessels by boarding. Having made his preparations, he took his station in the van, with a chosen crew, and provided with the somewhat odd munitions of a beetle and wedges; with these he intended to secure the rudders of the vessels, so that they might be prevented from bringing their broadsides to bear. At the appointed signal, the batteaux were put in motion, Putnam having quite unnecessarily assured

his men, that he should show them the way up the vessels' sides. But the object was effected in a less sanguinary way; at the moment of attack, the crew of one of the vessels compelled its captain to strike and the other was run on shore.

The fort of Oswegatchie was situated on an island, and was defended by *abatis*, overhanging the water, and apparently quite inaccessible. Putnam again devised a method of attack, for which he was indebted to no mortal engineer. With the permission of General Amherst, he caused a number of boats to be prepared, with musket-proof fascines along the sides, forming a complete shelter from the fire of the enemy; and a broad plank, twenty feet in length, was so attached to the bows of each, that it could be elevated or depressed at pleasure. It was his intention to force the boats directly against the *abatis*; when the planks, till then upright, were to be lowered, so as to form a species of bridge over the projecting stakes, and thus enable the assailants to scale them; the attention of the enemy was meanwhile to be distracted by simultaneous attacks upon various portions of the works. The signal had been given, and the boats were moving in order to the attack, when the sight of their strange enginery discomposed the nerves of the besieged, who surrendered without a blow.

Putnam was highly complimented for his inge-

nuity and courage by the general-in-chief; and it is in no small degree to be attributed to him, that the armies of Amherst and Murray, approaching Montreal from opposite directions, arrived on the same day beneath its walls. Colonel Haviland came in immediately after, when the conquest of Canada became complete, by the capitulation of the French.

It deserves to be mentioned that Putnam met once more with his savage master, at an Indian village in the neighborhood of Montreal, and was welcomed by him with much hospitality. The change of circumstances had given him an opportunity, which he did not neglect, of requiting the attentions of the Indian, whose kindness, though not of the most delicate kind, had been quite beyond the usual standard of his race.

In the spring of 1762, war having been declared by Great Britain against Spain, a powerful armament was prepared at Portsmouth for the reduction of Havana. A body of four thousand regulars was ordered from New York to join the expedition on the coast of Cuba, and a large Provincial force, under its own officers, coöperated in the enterprise. The regiment from Connecticut was under the command of General Lyman; but as he was called to the command of the whole Provincial force, the charge of it devolved on Lieutenant-Colonel Putnam.

The fleet arrived in safety on the coast of Cuba, but a violent storm arose before the troops were landed, and one of the transports, in which was Putnam with five hundred men, was thrown upon a dangerous reef. No aid could be afforded by the other ships, which with difficulty rode out the gale; but rafts were prepared of masts and spars, secured together with cordage, by means of which every individual reached the shore in safety. Having fortified his camp, Putnam remained for several days until the storm subsided; his troops were then reëmbarked in the convoy, and joined the armament before Havana. Their seasonable arrival gave fresh courage to the English, who had landed several weeks before, and had already lost half their number by privation, disease, and the sword. Their efforts were at length successful, but the success was very dearly purchased; the troops sunk by hundreds beneath the influence of the burning climate; scarcely any of the American soldiers, and a feeble remnant of the officers, returned to their own country.

The hostilities of the Western Indians were not terminated by the treaty of Paris in 1763; and a new expedition was undertaken against them in the course of the next year, to which Connecticut contributed four hundred men. This corps was under the command of Putnam, who now for the first time received the commission of a colonel.

Among his companions in the expedition was the Indian chief, of whom he had been formerly the captive. Little opportunity, however, was afforded for brilliant services; the savages were overawed, and next year concluded a treaty with the English.

A single incident occurred, which requires to be mentioned here. Before the Provincials reached Detroit, it had been invested by the Indians. Among its defenders was Captain Dalzell, the old associate and friend of Putnam. He had been detached by General Amherst to raise the siege, and found means to gain admission to the fortress; but, reluctant to disobey the orders of his commander, made a desperate sally against a formidable force. His troops were surrounded, and attempted to retreat. They had gained a temporary shelter, when he saw one of his sergeants without, desperately wounded, and exposed to capture by the enemy; his men were ordered to bring him in, but they declined the undertaking, as too hazardous; Captain Dalzell then went forth alone, declaring that he would never leave his comrade at the mercy of the savages. As he was raising the wounded man from the ground, the fire of the enemy was poured in, and they fell together. No nobler death ever ended the triumphs of the brave!

Colonel Putnam had now been engaged in the military service for about ten years; and no man

quitted it with greater honor. A larger measure of hardship and danger than had fallen to his lot, is rarely crowded into the compass of a single life. All this had been encountered, and all his duties been discharged with a chivalrous bravery and fulness of resource, which commanded universal admiration. Military education, except such as was the result of his experience, he had absolutely none ; his early instruction was very defective, and, had it been otherwise, could have done little towards qualifying him for the life which he had chosen ; but he had a calm good sense, a ready ingenuity, unbounded energy and self-possession in the midst of danger, which had made him fully equal to all the stations he was called to fill.

Personal bravery is perhaps the cheapest of the military virtues ; but there was something cool, daring, and unostentatious in that of Putnam, which attracted equally the wonder of the cultivated and the rude. In the words recorded by a personal friend upon his monument, he had always "dared to lead, where any dared to follow." His disposition was full of the frankness of the soldier, united with a kindness and generosity, not always found in union with the sterner qualities demanded by the life of camps ; an extended intercourse with others had refined the asperities of his manners, without impairing the simplicity of his genuine New England character.

He carried with him into private life the esteem and confidence of all. Throughout the country, there prevailed a strong feeling of respect for his services and military talent; and he was regarded as not the least able proficient in that seminary of no gentle discipline, the Seven Years' War. As there was now no call for the display of his ability as a soldier, he returned to his plough; and his fellow citizens took pleasure in offering such testimonies of esteem to it was in their power to give, by electing him to fill the higher municipal offices, and to represent them in the General Assembly of the State.

CHAPTER IV

Colonel Putnam opposes the Stamp Act. — Goes to Mississippi River to select Lands — His Intimacy with the British Officers in Boston. — Hastens to the Army on hearing of the Battle of Lexington. — Made a Brigadier-General of the Connecticut Troops. — Battle of Bunker's Hill.

THE great drama of the Revolution had already opened. In 1764, the British Parliament resolved that it would be proper to impose certain stamp duties, with a view to raise a revenue in America ; and next year the fatal scheme was consummated by the passage of the Stamp Act. The ties, which bound the colonies to the mother country, were nearly severed, and a flame began to ascend, which could be extinguished only with blood.

From the outset, Putnam's heart and hand were devoted to the cause of freedom ; and he brought to its support that manly energy and firmness, which never failed him in the hour of danger. He was among the foremost to compel the stamp-masters, appointed in Connecticut, to relinquish their odious office ; and, when this was accomplished, became one of a committee appointed to confer with the

governor of the colony upon the subject. He was asked by Governor Fitch what he, as chief executive magistrate, was to do, if the stamped paper should be sent him by the orders of the King: "Lock it up," replied Putnam, "and give us the key; then, if you think proper, to screen yourself from responsibility, prohibit us from entering the room where it is deposited; we will send it safely back." "But should I refuse you admission?" "In five minutes your house will be levelled with the dust."

Colonel Humphreys remarks, that the report of this conversation was believed to be one reason why the stamped paper was never sent to Connecticut. The repeal of the obnoxious act, in 1766, having somewhat tranquillized the popular feeling, Colonel Putnam returned once more to his agricultural labors. They were interrupted by two accidents, by one of which he was deprived of a portion of the thumb of his right hand, while the other was attended by a compound fracture of the thigh, which made him slightly lame for the remainder of his life.

General Lyman, whose name has been already mentioned, had been deputed by the surviving officers and soldiers of the expedition to Havana, to receive in England the portion of their prize-money, remaining due. He also acted as the agent of a company, who were solicitous to procure a

grant of land upon the Mississippi. After a delay of some years, the application for the grant was successful ; and, in 1770, General Lyman, accompanied by Colonel Putnam and two or three other persons, went from Connecticut up the Mississippi to explore the tract. Putnam placed some laborers on his portion, but did not himself remain or derive any permanent advantage from the undertaking. General Lyman revisited Connecticut with the rest of the party, but soon returned to Natchez, where he formed a settlement, and remained until his death.

In the interval between this period and the beginning of hostilities, Colonel Putnam had occasion frequently to visit Boston. He was familiarly known to General Gage, Lord Percy, and the other principal British officers, and often conversed with them on the subject of the controversy. Whenever he was questioned as to the part which he proposed to take, his answer was that he should be found on his country's side, and stand ready to abide the issue. It was intimated to him, that one acquainted as he was with the military power of Great Britain, could hardly think it unequal to the conquest of a country unprovided with any regular forces, magazines, or ships of war ; and his reply to this suggestion is full of sense and judgment. If the united forces of Great Britain and the colonies had required six years to conquer

Canada, he thought it would not be easy for British troops alone to subdue a country, with which Canada bore no comparison ; and he believed that the consciousness of a sacred cause would give vigor to the efforts of the colonists. Being asked, whether an army of five thousand veterans might not march from one end of the continent to the other ; " No doubt," he said, " if they conducted themselves properly, and paid for what they wanted ; but, should they attempt it in a hostile manner, the American women would knock them on the head with their ladles."*

On the 19th of April, 1775, the hour of trial came. Colonel Putnam was laboring in the field, when the news of the battle of Lexington was brought to him ; he left his plough standing in the furrow, and without even waiting to exchange his clothes, rode with the utmost expedition to the scene of action. On the 21st, he attended a council of war at Cambridge. The Assembly of Con-

* There are some other weapons, to which the women might possibly have resorted in such an emergency. In 1684, Cranfield, the governor of New Hampshire, undertook to tax the people of that colony without their consent, but found it impossible to enforce the imposition. The provost, to whom the tax-bills were committed for collection, testified, that the people of Exeter drove the sheriff away with cudgels ; the women having prepared red-hot spits and boiling water, by way of increasing the warmth of his welcome.

necticut was then in session. He was summoned back by that body to confer with them respecting the preparations for the campaign; and, when the object was effected, received a commission as brigadier-general, and returned to the camp, leaving orders for the troops to follow as rapidly as possible. These, to the number of three thousand, were soon upon their march.

On the 21st of May, General Ward was commissioned as major-general and commander-in-chief of the troops of Massachusetts; and his orders were obeyed by all the officers of other colonies within the province. General Putnam was first in rank among the officers of Connecticut; but the troops from the various colonies were distributed among the several stations. The head-quarters of the commander-in-chief were at Cambridge, with eight thousand Massachusetts troops, and one thousand from Connecticut; the latter, with two other regiments, being stationed at Inman's Farm, an advanced position, under the immediate command of General Putnam. The right wing of the army, consisting of two thousand men from Massachusetts, one thousand from Rhode Island, and the remainder of the Connecticut troops, was at Roxbury, under the command of Brigadier General Thomas; and the left was composed of one thousand from New Hampshire under Colonels Stark and Reed, who were at Medford, and

another detachment of the same troops, together with three companies of Gerrish's regiment, at Chelsea. General Ward had with him five companies of artillery, and General Thomas three or four. The British army in Boston, at the close of the month of May, consisted of ten thousand men.

Perhaps there was no officer in the American army, eminent as many of them certainly were, who enjoyed more of the public confidence than General Putnam. Several of them had become distinguished in the old French war, and there were some, whose capacity to conduct large military operations was perhaps superior to his; but there was no one of greater promptness and energy in action, or who had acquired a higher reputation for adventurous bravery.

In the course of the month of May, it was determined to remove the cattle from the islands in Boston harbor, in order to cut off the supplies of the enemy, who were blockaded in the town. For this purpose, three or four hundred men were detached, and succeeded in removing them from Hog Island and Noddle's Island. A skirmish was thus occasioned, in which several of the marines, who had been stationed to guard them, were killed. The Americans were fired on by the British vessels in the harbor, and a reinforcement of three hundred men, with two pieces of artillery, was ordered to support them. One of the armed

vessels, a schooner, which lay near the shore, was set on fire by the artillery, and destroyed ; and a second was towed beyond the range of the shot by the boats of the fleet. The affair was not of much importance, except as it served to inspire confidence in the troops, who found that they could encounter the enemy with success. On this occasion, General Warren accompanied Putnam as a volunteer.

The spirit of the Americans was high, and they were impatient to be led into action ; but their disorganized and unprovided state rendered such a step very hazardous. Many of the officers and men, who had been accustomed only to the irregular service of rangers, could not appreciate the necessity of long and thorough discipline ; and the general voice of the people called for some decisive measures.

General Putnam was himself desirous, that the advantage of this spirit should not be lost by inaction ; and he urged the necessity, not of hazarding a general engagement, but of some partial action in which the Americans, under cover of intrenchments, might cause the enemy to feel their skill as marksmen ; it being a favorite maxim with him, that, if the militia could find protection for their legs, they were quite indifferent to the welfare of the rest of their persons. The same opinion was maintained by Colonel Prescott and other veteran

officers, and the subject was considered with much earnestness in the council of war.

General Ward and General Warren, on the other hand, were apprehensive that the issue of an action could not fail to prove disastrous ; the supply of ammunition was very limited ; and they feared that it must terminate in a general engagement, in which the Americans would be defeated. But the bolder counsel at length prevailed. The Committee of Safety had received information, that it was the intention of the British to occupy the heights of Dorchester and Charlestown ; and the necessity of anticipating them in at least a portion of this scheme was obvious to all. The committee therefore recommended to the council of war, to take possession of Bunker's Hill without delay. The heights of Charlestown had already been examined by Putnam and other officers, and the advantage of the position fully ascertained.

For the information of those who are unacquainted with the place, it may be proper to remark, that the peninsula of Charlestown is somewhat more than a mile in length from east to west, and eleven hundred yards across from north to south ; washed on the north by Mystic River, and on the south by Charles River, which approach within about one hundred yards of each other at the Neck of the peninsula. The eastern part is separated from Boston by a narrow channel.

From the Neck rises Bunker's Hill, to the height of a little more than one hundred feet, terminating in a tongue of land, which extends for a considerable distance along the shore of Mystic River, about twenty feet above the water. The summit of Breed's Hill, which is about sixty feet in height, rises in a southeasterly direction from Bunker's Hill, towards Boston; between this and the tongue of land, on the north, is a slough, and the village of Charlestown lay on the south, on the declivity and at the base. Morton's Point is the northeastern extremity of the peninsula, and the hill of the same name, thirty-five feet high, rises near it.

The detachment, intended for the expedition, consisting of about one thousand men, under the immediate command of Colonel Prescott, were assembled on Cambridge Common at an early hour on the evening of the 16th of June, where prayers were offered by the President of Harvard College. General Putnam accompanied the detachment. They moved at nightfall through Cambridge and across the Neck of the peninsula, Colonel Prescott, dressed in his calico frock, leading the way. A question now arose respecting the height, which was intended to be fortified. Bunker's Hill had been designated for the purpose by the Committee, while Breed's Hill appeared better suited to the object of the expedition; but it is probable, that the former name was

usually applied indiscriminately to both the heights. So much time was consumed by the discussion, that it was nearly midnight before it was concluded to erect the principal work on Breed's Hill, and a subsidiary one on Bunker's Hill for the protection of the rear, and as a rallying-point in the event of their being driven from the other.

A redoubt, about eight rods square, was accordingly laid out on the summit of Breed's Hill, with a breastwork, extending from its northeastern angle down the northern declivity to the slough. Before the action, the American line was extended to the left across the tongue of land to Mystic River. This was done by General Putnam, who ordered Captain Knowlton, just as the enemy were landing, to take post with some Connecticut troops behind a rail fence, running in the direction already mentioned, about two hundred yards in the rear of the breastwork; and an imperfect intrenchment was made by disposing other fences in a parallel line and throwing some newly-mown grass between.

While the men were engaged in their labors on the breastwork and redoubt, General Putnam returned to Cambridge to procure a reinforcement; but the report of a sudden cannonade induced him to repair without hesitation to his post. The operations of the detachment were unknown to the British until daylight, when a heavy fire was opened on them by the ships and batteries. At

the suggestion of some of his officers, who were anxious that the men should be relieved, Colonel Prescott convened a council of war; expressing at the same time his aversion to the proposition, and insisting, that, as they had endured the labor, they were entitled to the honor of the victory.

Putnam again returned to Cambridge for provisions and a reinforcement, and equally without effect. Colonel Prescott now called another council of war, still refusing to ask to be relieved; but he consented to apply to General Ward for the aid which had been twice asked in vain. Movements had already been observed among the British troops in Boston, indicating their design to prepare for an attack. By eleven o'clock, General Ward had issued his orders to the troops of Colonels Stark and Reed at Medford, to proceed to the scene of action; but, before this fact could be ascertained, all possible preparation had been made to repel the enemy.

Putnam had withdrawn a detachment from the redoubt to throw up the contemplated work on Bunker's Hill, a position by which Breed's Hill was completely commanded; and he resolved to make another effort, before the preparations of the enemy could be completed, to procure an additional force from Cambridge. He repaired thither for the third time across the Neck, which was now swept by the fire of a man-of-war and

floating batteries ; but, learning there what orders had been issued, he hastened back to Charlestown.

The expected reinforcement at length arrived ; and Putnam, reserving a portion of them to aid in the construction of the work on Bunker's Hill, ordered Stark and Reed to join the Connecticut troops at the rail fence with the residue. Colonel Prescott had on his part been indefatigable in his preparations, and all were anxiously awaiting the approach of the enemy.

Never was the fearful spectacle of battle presented to the eye, under circumstances more striking, or of deeper interest. Every movement of the troops on either side was distinctly open to the view of thousands, who watched from the neighboring roofs and spires the changes of the scene. On the one hand, the hopes of freedom depended on the issue ; on the other there was a deep solicitude to support the honor of the British name. The day was beautifully clear and cloudless.

At noon, twenty-eight barges, containing four battalions of infantry and twenty companies of light infantry and grenadiers, with six pieces of artillery, moved in perfect order across the channel, their brilliant arms flashing in the sun of June. They landed at Morton's Point, and were soon joined by a second detachment. Shortly after, a third detachment reached the shore, near the east end

of Breed's Hill. The united force consisted of about five thousand men.

A fire was now opened on the American lines by the British artillery at Morton's Hill ; and it was answered by a few pieces from the redoubt, which soon became useless and were carried to the rear. As one of the captains of artillery was retreating over Bunker's Hill, Putnam ordered him back to his post, threatening him with death if he should disobey. He returned ; but the pieces were deserted, and his men took their stations in the line.

A single horseman rode at full speed over Bunker's Hill, and encountered General Putnam. It was General Warren ; and Putnam offered to receive his orders. Warren replied, that he came only as a volunteer, and desired to know where his services would be most useful. Putnam pointed to the redoubt, remarking that he would be covered there. "I came not," said Warren, "for the purpose of security ; tell me where the onset will be most severe." "Go, then, to the redoubt," said Putnam ; "Prescott is there, and will do his duty ; if that can be defended, the day is ours." Warren rode forward to the redoubt, where he was received with loud acclamations. Again he was offered the command by Colonel Prescott, but still declined it ; observing, that he was happy to study the art of war under such an officer.

At three o'clock, the British line was formed, and the troops moved in perfect and imposing order towards the rail fence and redoubt. Putnam hastened from his post on Bunker's Hill, rode along the lines, and ordered the men to reserve their fire till the enemy were within eight rods, and then to prove their well-known skill as marksmen; the same order was enforced by Prescott, Stark, and all the veteran officers. As the British were advancing, all within those low intrenchments was silent as death. Just as the enemy were upon them, the signal was given; a close and deadly fire blazed along the lines, and the front ranks of the enemy were swept down before it. Rank followed rank, but in vain; the order was given to retreat, and a shout of victory rung through the American line.

In the mean time, reinforcements from Cambridge reached the Neck, but were reluctant to encounter the enfilading fire. When the British had retreated, Putnam hurried to the spot to bring them over, riding backward and forward several times, while the earth was thrown up by the balls around him; but few could be persuaded to follow.

The British commander had now rallied and re-organized his men; a second time he led them against the Americans, who were ordered to reserve their fire, till the enemy should be nearer

than before. Charlestown was at this time set on fire, and, as the troops were advancing, the flames ascended on their left. They hurried on, firing with the coolness and precision of a holiday review. Once more the American lines were still, until the enemy came to the appointed distance; again the fire blazed forth with the same fatal precision as before, and the ground in front of the intrenchments was covered with the dead and wounded.

Nearly a thousand of the enemy, with a vast proportion of officers, had now fallen; and the order to retreat was given for the second time. Major Small, the old friend of Putnam, was standing alone; the muskets were levelled at him, when Putnam threw them up with his sword, and he retired unhurt. But the ammunition of the Americans was at length exhausted. Colonel Prescott ordered his men to club their muskets, and hurl the stones of the parapet against the enemy should they venture on a third attack; while Putnam galloped to the rear, and labored in vain to bring up the scattered reinforcements.

The British threw aside their knapsacks, and were ordered to reserve their fire, and trust to the bayonet. They then concentrated their force on the redoubt and breastwork, where every effort was vainly made to repel them. Prescott, unprovided with bayonets and exhausted of his ammuni-

tion, at length gave the reluctant order to retreat ; and his troops moved slowly down the western declivity of the hill. It was at this moment, that the gallant Warren fell. The American left continued to repel the enemy, but finding their flank opened by the retreat of the right, were compelled in their turn to retire. Putnam indignantly urged the troops to make a stand upon Bunker's Hill. He took his station between them and the enemy, exposed to the hottest of the fire ; but the men were unable to encounter the British bayonet. The Americans continued their retreat over the Neck to Prospect and Winter Hills, where they took up their position for the night.

In presenting this sketch of a battle, so important to the cause of freedom, it was of course impossible to enter very minutely into the conduct and services of others, who shared with General Putnam the glory of the day ; and this has been rendered unnecessary by the diligent research of Colonel Swett, who has written a very interesting account of its details.

We have thus far refrained from saying any thing of the particular command allotted to Putnam on this occasion. In the work to which we have just referred, he is mentioned as having the general control and superintendence of the expedition ; and this opinion is supported by the following considerations. He was the only general

officer who was present at the battle ; and it is very improbable, that the various detachments should have been left without a commander of the whole. He appears also to have acted, throughout the battle and the previous arrangements for it, in this capacity.

Such was the purport of his own constant declarations ; and if any evidence were wanting of his personal honor, it may be found in the language of President Dwight respecting him. " His word was regarded as an ample security for any thing, for which it was pledged ; and his uprightness commanded absolute confidence." On the other hand, the orderly book of General Ward is silent on the subject of the expedition, and no orders for its conduct and command are now to be discovered. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to speak with certainty upon the question. However it may be determined, there can be no doubt, that the part taken by General Putnam was in the highest degree important and effective.

Shortly after the battle of Bunker's Hill, it was proposed to Putnam by Sir William Howe, through the medium of Major Small, to accept the commission of major-general in the British service. A large pecuniary offer was at the same time made to him. It is needless to say, that these offers were indignantly rejected.

CHAPTER V.

Putnam is appointed Major-General in the Continental Army. — Remains at Cambridge till the Evacuation of Boston. — Commands at New York. — Suggests a Mode of obstructing the Navigation of the Hudson, to prevent the Enemy's Vessels from ascending it. — Commands on Long Island. — New York evacuated. — Retreat through New Jersey. — Putnam stationed at Philadelphia, and afterwards at Princeton. — Anecdotes.

ON the 15th of June, George Washington was unanimously elected by Congress general and commander-in-chief of the American army ; and Generals Ward, Lee, Schuyler, and Putnam were appointed to act as major-generals under him. He arrived at Cambridge on the 2d of July, and next day entered upon his most momentous and responsible command. He had no personal acquaintance with Putnam before this period ; but he found him bold, energetic, and single-hearted, frank and generous in his disposition, and diligent and faithful in the discharge of all his duties “ You seem, General Putnam,” said he, after examining a work which had been erected with great

expedition, "to have the faculty of infusing your own industrious spirit into all the workmen you employ."

In one of his letters from Cambridge, addressed to the President of Congress, he speaks of Putnam as "a most valuable man, and a fine executive officer"; and the commendation of Washington was never thoughtlessly bestowed. These are the very words, which the reader of Putnam's history would probably consider best suited to describe his personal and military character; and they are important, also, as indicating the keen glance with which Washington penetrated the qualities of those around him. In General Putnam's own sphere, which was that of prompt and chivalrous action, he had no superior; and it costs us nothing to admit, that, in the conduct of war upon a very extensive scale, he might be excelled by some of his fellow laborers in the cause of freedom.

During the remainder of this season, the condition of the army was such, as to render it inexpedient to venture upon hostile operations; there was little or no powder in the magazines, and the troops were in every respect so deficient and ill-provided, that General Washington, as he himself declared, was compelled to use art to conceal their situation from his own officers, as well as from the enemy. Meantime the people of the country, not knowing or unable to appreciate these diffi-

culties, were constantly expecting some decisive blow; and on the 22d of December, Congress resolved, that, if General Washington and his council should be of opinion, that a successful attack could be made upon the troops in Boston, he should make it, "notwithstanding the town and property in it might thereby be destroyed."

The harbor was frozen over by the middle of February, and Washington himself was then desirous of hazarding a general assault; but nearly all his officers were hostile to the scheme, and it was reluctantly abandoned. They recommended, however, in partial compliance with his suggestions, that preparations should be made to occupy the Heights of Dorchester; a measure, which could scarcely fail to be followed by a battle. It was determined, also, that, if a sufficient number of the enemy should march to the assault of that position, materially to reduce the garrison of Boston, a body of four thousand men, under the command of General Putnam, should land in the west part of the town, and force their way to the Neck at Roxbury, where the troops from that quarter were to join them.

The Heights of Dorchester were accordingly occupied; but the plan formed by the enemy to carry that position was defeated by a storm, and on the 17th of March, the town was evacuated. When the first intelligence of the preparations

of the British for departure was received at Cambridge, several regiments under the command of Putnam were embarked in boats, and dropped down the river. On landing at its mouth, the fact of the departure of the British was fully ascertained, and a detachment was ordered to take possession of the town. Another detachment marched in at the same time from Roxbury, and the whole were placed under the command of Putnam, who proceeded to possess himself of all the important posts.

Early in January, General Washington had been informed, that an expedition was fitting out at Boston, with the view to take possession of New York ; and he ordered General Lee to repair immediately thither, with such volunteers as he could assemble on his march, and to make the best arrangements for its defence, that circumstances would admit. General Lee was also instructed to disarm all disaffected persons, and to examine the state of the fortifications on the North River, in order to secure them from the danger of surprise.

On his arrival at New York, it was determined to fortify some commanding position in the city, to erect batteries at Hell Gate for the security of the entrance of the harbor, as well as for the protection of the communication with Long Island, where a fortified camp was proposed to be estab-

lished, and to strengthen and garrison the defences of the Highlands.

It soon appeared, that the expedition already mentioned was destined farther south ; and Lee was ordered from New York by Congress, on the 1st of March, to take command of the Southern department of the army. After the evacuation of Boston, General Washington, deeming the preservation of New York as of the last importance to the cause, sent on a portion of his troops to that city ; and, on the 29th of March, General Putnam was ordered to assume the command at that station, and to execute the plan of defence, which had been projected by General Lee.

General Putnam, on his arrival at New York, devoted himself, with the utmost assiduity, to the charge with which he was intrusted. The British fleet had been thus far amply supplied with fresh provisions from the shore ; a species of accommodation, which he forthwith made the subject of a pointed prohibition ; and the good effects of this step were soon exhibited by the departure of some of the vessels from the harbor. By the middle of April, General Washington arrived with the greater portion of his army, and entered on the chief command ; but the preparations for defence were still prosecuted by General Putnam. On the 21st of May, Washington, in obedience to the call of Congress, went to Philadelphia to confer

with them respecting the condition of affairs, during his absence, General Putnam was commander of the army.

The judgment of Washington had easily foreseen, that New York and the Hudson would be the first objects of the attention of the enemy. Early in July, General Howe, who had sailed for Halifax after evacuating Boston, returned and landed with his army at Staten Island; where he was soon joined by a powerful armament from England, under the command of Lord Howe, his brother. Before the arrival of the squadron, General Washington, under the direction of Congress, had instructed General Putnam to prepare fire-rafts and gondolas to prevent the ships from entering the New York Bay or Narrows; and he was also charged with the supervision of various other schemes, designed for a similar object.

The plan of destroying the British fleet by means of fire-ships, had been suggested to Congress by a Mr. Anderson. General Putnam himself projected a novel species of *chevaux-de-frise* to obstruct the channel. Two ships, about seventy feet distant from each other, connected by the sterns with large pieces of timber, were ordered to be sunk with their bows towards the shore. But neither of these plans was ultimately successful; the *chevaux-de-frise* were broken by the ships of war, and an attempt made with the fire-ships to

destroy the vessels, that had passed up the river, was followed only by the burning of a single tender.

Another experiment was made, under the eye of General Putnam, with a singular machine, which was invented by David Bushnell, of Connecticut. It was a boat, so constructed as to be capable of being propelled at any depth below the surface of the water, and of being elevated or depressed at pleasure; to this was attached a magazine of powder, designed to be secured by a screw to the bottom of a ship; when the magazine should be disengaged from the boat, certain machinery was to be set in motion, which would cause it to explode at any time desired. The whole was to be managed by a single person, stationed in the boat. Mr. Bushnell, the inventor, was too feeble to undertake its management himself, but had taught the secret to his brother, who chanced to be ill at the time when the British fleet arrived.

His place was supplied by a sergeant of the army, who was instructed to manage the machine as well as time and circumstances would permit. Late in the evening he set forth upon his expedition, and sailed directly underneath the Eagle man-of-war, the flag ship of the British admiral; but the screw, with which he was to penetrate the copper sheathing, struck some iron plates, near the rudder; the tide was strong, and the inexperience of the

sergeant prevented him from applying the proper remedy to remove the difficulty, before the day began to dawn. He therefore abandoned the magazine to its fate, and reached the shore, where General Putnam was anxiously awaiting the issue of the enterprise. A prodigious explosion followed at some distance from the ship, to the infinite consternation and perplexity of all who were unacquainted with the secret ; but various circumstances occurred to prevent a repetition of the experiment.

As the safety of New York essentially depended on the possession of Long Island, a body of troops was early stationed on the peninsula of Brooklyn, where a camp had been marked out and fortified. This was expected to be, as it proved, the first object of the enemy's attack. The works had been erected under the supervision of General Greene, who alone possessed a thorough knowledge of the posts and of the routes by which the British would probably approach ; but he was unfortunately taken ill, and the command devolved on General Sullivan. The British army landed on the island on the 22d of August, and it became certain that an engagement must soon take place. On the 23d, General Putnam was ordered with reinforcements to take the command at Brooklyn ; but the time intervening between his appointment and the battle was too short to

pernit him to obtain the essential information, to which we have above alluded. The British army was now arranged in the following order. Lord Cornwallis, with the right wing, was at Flatland; the centre, under General De Heister, was at Flatbush; the left, commanded by General Grant, extended to the western shore; the centre being about four miles, and the right and left wings about six miles, distant from the American lines at Brooklyn. Besides the direct road leading from Flatbush to Brooklyn, there was another which led more circuitously by the way of Bedford. A strong redoubt had been erected by the Americans on the former, and a detachment was posted on the other; another detachment was also stationed to guard the passes by the western shore. General Putnam appears to have expected, that the principal attack would be made in the last of these directions.

On the morning of the 27th, General Clinton led the British van on the road to Bedford, designing to turn the American left, while De Heister and Grant advanced at the same time from their respective positions. Lord Stirling, with two regiments, was ordered by General Putnam to repel the corps of Grant; General Sullivan advanced on the direct road leading to Flatbush; and the American left, which consisted of two regiments, under the command of their respective

colonels, occupied the road leading from that place to Bedford. While General Clinton was effecting his main purpose of gaining the rear of the American left, attacks were made by Grant and De Heister on the right and centre, in order to withdraw their attention from this most decisive movement. The purpose of Clinton was at length effected; the British centre, which had hitherto advanced only to divert the attention of the Americans, now attacked the troops of Sullivan; and these, discovering the movement of Clinton upon their left, were broken and fled, leaving their general a prisoner.

Lord Stirling, in the mean time, whose situation had been rendered extremely critical by the defeat of the other divisions, gave the order to retire; and, to cover more effectually the retreat of the main body of his detachment, charged a corps of the British under Cornwallis with spirit, and for a time with success; but was at length compelled to surrender. The whole American force engaged in this action, amounted to about five thousand men, while the British army exceeded twice that number; but the loss of the Americans was comparatively very great. It was shown by the result of the battle, that the camp of Brooklyn was no longer tenable; and, on the night of the 29th, while the British were encamped within six hundred yards of the works

the troops were withdrawn to New York, by General Washington himself, with so great celerity and skill, that nearly all the artillery and stores were saved. The movement was undiscovered by the enemy, until half an hour after the works had been evacuated, though the noise of their spades and pickaxes was distinctly heard within the American lines.

It was now obvious, that the city of New York must be sooner or later abandoned ; but the principal officers of the army were solicitous to retain possession of it, as long as might be in their power. The army was arranged in three divisions ; one of which, under General Putnam, was stationed in the city, another at Kingsbridge, and the third occupied an intermediate position, so that it could be readily brought to the support of either.

On the 12th of September, a council of war came to the resolution to evacuate the city, and the events of the few succeeding days demonstrated, that this measure was quite indispensable. Three days after, some British ships ascended the North River as high as Bloomingdale, while Sir Henry Clinton, with four thousand men, landed on the eastern shore of the island, at Kipp's Bay. Their landing was covered by the fire of five ships of war. The new levies stationed to defend the works at this position fled, without waiting for the enemy ; and two brigades of Putnam's division,

which had been ordered to support them, imitated their example ; breaking at the approach of about sixty of the British, and flying without firing a single shot. General Washington met them in their flight, and vainly used every possible effort to rally them ; he was left alone within eighty yards of the enemy ; but he refused to fly, and was rescued only by the care of some of his attendants, who seized his horse's bridle, and turned him from the field. Orders were immediately given to secure the Heights of Haerlem ; and they were at once occupied by the fugitives and the other troops in the vicinity.

The main road leading from the city to Kingsbridge was in possession of the enemy, and General Putnam resolved to secure the retreat of his division by the route of Bloomingdale. The manner in which it was effected will be best described in the words of an eyewitness.

“ Having myself,” says Colonel Humphreys, “ been a volunteer in his division, and acting adjutant to the last regiment that left the city, I had frequent opportunities, that day, of beholding him (Putnam), for the purpose of issuing orders and encouraging the troops, flying, on his horse covered with foam, wherever his presence was most necessary. Without his extraordinary exertions, the guards must have been inevitably lost ; and it is probable the entire corps would have been cut in pieces.

“ When we were not far from Bloomingdale, an aid-de-camp came from him at full speed, to inform that a column of British infantry was descending upon our right. Our rear was soon fired upon, and the colonel of our regiment, whose order was just communicated for the front to file off to the left, was killed upon the spot. With no other loss we joined the army, after dark, upon the Heights of Haerlem. Before our brigades came in, we were given up for lost by all our friends. So critical indeed was our situation, and so narrow the gap by which we had escaped, that, the instant we had passed, the enemy closed it by extending their line from river to river.”

The enemy's shipping having passed up the North River, notwithstanding the obstructions, the American army was withdrawn from the island of New York to the neighborhood of the White Plains. On the 28th of October, the British forces advanced in order of battle, and a brigade of Hessians was detached to dislodge a corps of about sixteen hundred militia from Chatterton's Hill, where they were stationed to cover the right flank of the army. After a sharp encounter, the Hessians remained in possession of the hill. Major-General Putnam, who had been ordered to support the militia, met them in full retreat, and it was then too late to attempt to retake the post; but no attack was made upon the camp of Washington, who

withdrew, on the night of the 1st of November, to the heights in the rear of his first camp.

A few days after, General Putnam was sent across the Hudson, to provide against a descent of the enemy upon New Jersey ; and on the 13th, General Washington passed the river with about five thousand men, and took post at Hackinsac. And, when Fort Washington and Fort Lee had fallen, began the retreat of the “phantom of an army,” as it was emphatically called by Hamilton, through New Jersey ; when Washington was compelled to face a powerful army with scarce three thousand men ; unprovided with all that makes a soldier’s life endurable, and this too in the depth of winter, and abandoned by General Lee, to whom the command on the east bank of the Hudson had unfortunately been confided.

There was no darker period in the history of the Revolution ; scarcely any spirit, but that of Washington, was unshaken by the accumulated weight of difficulty and disaster ; nor could he, without deep emotion, witness the suffering, which he had no power to relieve.

Throughout this season of peril, until the army had crossed the Delaware, General Putnam was at his commander’s side ; and it may be well imagined, that he would have been one of the last to intermit his efforts in the almost hopeless cause.

The passage of the Delaware was effected on the 8th of December ; it became now all-important to prevent the enemy from occupying Philadelphia, and General Putnam was ordered to make immediate provision for its fortification. Congress had already resolved that it should be defended to the last extremity.

At this time an incident occurred, which strikingly illustrates the foresight and sagacity of Washington. A report had been circulated, that Congress was about to separate ; and on the 11th of December it was resolved by that Assembly that the commander-in-chief “be desired to contradict this scandalous suggestion of the enemy, this Congress having a better opinion of the spirit and vigor of the army, and of the good people of these States, than to suppose it can be necessary to disperse ; nor will they adjourn from the city or Philadelphia in the present state of affairs, until the last necessity shall direct it.” This resolution was forwarded on the same day to Washington, who was at once convinced that its publication would be attended with evil consequences, and took upon himself the responsibility of suppressing it in the next day’s orders.

In a letter addressed on the 12th to the President of Congress he says ; “I am persuaded, if the subject is taken up and reconsidered, that Congress will concur with me in sentiment. I doubt

not, but there are some, who have propagated the report ; but what if they have ? Their remaining in or leaving Philadelphia must be governed by circumstances and events. If their departure should become necessary, it will be right ; on the other hand, if there should not be a necessity for it, they will remain, and their continuance will show the report to be the production of calumny and falsehood. In a word, Sir, I conceive it a matter, that may be as well disregarded ; and that the removal or staying of Congress, depending entirely on events, should not have been the subject of a resolve.”

Well was it for Congress, that their resolution was suppressed by Washington ; for, on the self-same day on which he wrote, that body adjourned to meet again in Baltimore on the 20th of December. It appears, that General Putnam, who had entered on the command, and General Mifflin, his predecessor in the station, had been summoned by Congress to a conference ; and it was in consequence of their judicious suggestions, that the resolve for an adjournment was adopted.*

“Upon the salvation of Philadelphia,” was the earnest language of Washington, “our cause almost depends ;” and his selection of General Putnam to command it at this crisis denotes the confi-

* See *Writings of Washington*, Sparks's edition, Vol. IV. p. 210.

dence reposed by the commander-in-chief in his energy and skill. Nor were his expectations disappointed; General Putnam entered on his duties with his usual diligence, forwarded with all his power the construction of the fortifications, and labored with untiring zeal to reconcile contending factions, and to animate the citizens to efforts for their own defence.

While he was thus employed, General Washington was preparing to attack the enemy at Trenton. It was a part of his original plan to call Putnam to coöperate in the enterprise, with the troops at Philadelphia and a corps of the Pennsylvania militia; but he was induced to change this plan by an apprehension of an insurrection among the Royalists within the city. General Putnam had therefore no share in the victory at Trenton, nor in that of Princeton, by which it was succeeded.

So great was the effect of these enterprises on the enemy, that Washington began to entertain the hope of driving them beyond the limits of New Jersey. On the 5th of January, 1777, he ordered General Putnam to march with the troops under his command to Crosswick, a few miles southeast of Trenton, using the utmost precaution to guard against surprise, and laboring to create an impression that his force was twice as great as it actually was. The object of the commander-in-chief was

partially accomplished by the concentration of the British forces at New Brunswick and Amboy ; and General Putnam was soon after ordered to take post at Princeton, where he passed the remainder of the winter. This position was scarcely fifteen miles distant from the enemy's camp at New Brunswick ; but the troops of Putnam at no time exceeded a few hundred, and were once fewer in number than the miles of frontier he was expected to guard.

Captain Macpherson, a Scotch officer of the seventeenth British regiment, had received in the battle of Princeton a severe wound, which was thought likely to prove fatal. When General Putnam reached that place, he found that it had been deemed inexpedient to provide medical aid and other comforts for one who was likely to require them for so short a period ; but by his orders the captain was attended with the utmost care, and at length recovered. He was warm in the expression of his gratitude ; and one day, when Putnam, in reply to his inquiries, had assured him that he was a Yankee, averred that he had not believed it possible for any human being but a Scotchman to be so kind and generous.

Indeed, the benevolence of the general was one day put to a somewhat delicate test. The patient, when his recovery was considered doubtful, solicited that a friend in the British army at New

Brunswick might be permitted to come and aid him in the preparation of his will. Full sorely perplexed was General Putnam, by his desire on the one hand to gratify the wishes of his prisoner, and a natural reluctance on the other, to permit the enemy to spy out the nakedness of his camp. His good nature at length prevailed, but not at the expense of his discretion; and a flag of truce was despatched, with orders not to return with the captain's friend until after dark.

By the time of his arrival, lights were displayed in all the apartments of the College Hall, and in all the vacant houses in the town; and the army, which then consisted of fifty effective men, were marched about with remarkable celerity, sometimes in close column, and sometimes in detachments, with unusual pomp and circumstance, around the quarters of the captain. It was subsequently ascertained, as we are assured by Colonel Humphreys, that the force of Putnam was computed by the framer of the will, on his return to the British camp, to consist, on the lowest estimate, of five thousand men.

During his command at Princeton, General Putnam was employed, with activity and much success, in affording protection to the persons in his neighborhood, who remained faithful to the American cause. They were exposed to great danger, from the violent incursions of the Loyalists;

and constant vigilance was required, in order to guard against the depredations of the latter. Through the whole winter there raged a war of skirmishes. On the 17th of February, Colonel Nielson, with a party of one hundred and fifty militia, was sent by General Putnam to surprise a small corps of Loyalists who were fortifying themselves at Lawrence's Neck. They were of the corps of Cortlandt Skinner, of New Jersey, a brigadier-general of Provincials in the British service. We know not how to relate the result of this affair more briefly than it is given in the following extract from a letter addressed by Putnam to the Council of Safety of Pennsylvania, on the day after it occurred.

"Yesterday evening, Colonel Nielson, with a hundred and fifty men, at Lawrence's Neck, attacked sixty men of Cortlandt Skinner's brigade, commanded by the enemy's renowned land pilot, Richard Stockton, and took the whole prisoners ; among them the major, a captain, and three subalterns, with seventy stand of arms. Fifty of the Bedford Pennsylvania riflemen behaved like veterans."

On another occasion, he detached Major Smith with a few riflemen, against a foraging party of the enemy, and followed him with the rest of his forces ; but, before he came up, the party had been captured by the riflemen. These, and other

similar incidents, may appear individually as of little moment ; but before the close of the winter, General Putnam had thus taken nearly a thousand prisoners, and had accomplished the more important object of keeping the disaffected in continual awe.

CHAPTER VI.

Putnam commands in the Highlands. — Operations during the Campaign. — The British ascend the Hudson. — General Putnam superintends the Construction of the Fortifications at West Point. — His perilous Adventure at Horseneck. — Retires from the Army in Consequence of a Paralytic Attack. — His Death. — His military and personal Character.

IN the month of May, 1777, General Putnam was ordered by Washington to assume the chief command of the army of the Highlands, on Hudson's River; and was particularly charged with the execution of a plan, devised by Knox and Greene, to obstruct the passage of the enemy's ships in the river. Much uncertainty rested at this time on the ultimate purposes of the British generals, Burgoyne and Howe; and it became necessary for the Americans, with forces quite inadequate to the purpose, to prepare for the defence of the three important points of Ticonderoga, Philadelphia, and the Highlands.

Sometimes there was reason to believe that Burgoyne and Howe intended to unite their forces on the Hudson River; at others, that the troops

of the former would be transported by water for the purpose of reinforcing General Howe, without advancing from Canada ; and, for a considerable period, the destination of the force of Howe himself, who sailed with the British fleet from New York towards the close of July, was wrapped in equal mystery. As circumstances appeared to favor either of these suppositions, the American forces at different stations, including the greater part of that of Putnam, were detached in different directions. All that remained for him to do was to stand ready to execute the orders of Washington, and to transmit such intelligence of the enemy's movements as came into his possession ; and he attended to these objects with the activity and vigilance required by the exigency.

On the 3d of August, Sir Henry Clinton, who commanded the British force in the city of New York, sent up a flag of truce to General Putnam at Peekskill. Edmund Palmer, a lieutenant of a Tory regiment, had been detected in the American camp, and it was the purpose of Clinton to claim him as an officer in the British service. The following was the reply sent back by Putnam.

“ Head Quarters, 7th August, 1777.

“ Edmund Palmer, an officer in the enemy's service, was taken as a spy lurking within our lines ; he has been tried as a spy, condemned as a

spy, and shall be executed as a spy, and the flag is ordered to depart immediately.

“ISRAEL PUTNAM.

“P. S. He has been accordingly executed.”

A few weeks afterwards, Sir Henry Clinton availed himself of the opportunity afforded by the absence of the main American army, to make an incursion into the interior of New Jersey. On the 12th of September, with a force consisting of about two thousand men, in four divisions, he proceeded to ravage the country, with little opposition. When General Putnam received intelligence of this movement, he sent General McDougall across the Hudson with fifteen hundred men ; but they were too late to overtake the enemy, who returned on the 16th to New York, with considerable booty.

General Putnam himself now devised a plan for attacking the enemy at the four different points of Staten Island, Long Island, Paulus Hook, and the Island of New York, at the same time. He had been encouraged to expect the aid of large bodies of militia from Connecticut, and hoped to derive similar assistance from New Jersey and New York ; and thus supported, he entertained no doubt of his ability to succeed in the enterprise.

On the 23d of September, however, he received an urgent letter from Washington, which compelled him to abandon his design. Affairs were assuming

a critical aspect in the neighborhood of Philadelphia; and twenty-five hundred men were summoned to the main army from the force of Putnam, who was instructed to call in the militia to supply their place. For this purpose he made instant requisition on the governors of Connecticut and New York; but, as no hostile demonstrations appeared, and the militia were impatient of detention at the time of harvest, he discharged such portions of them as had not spontaneously deserted him.

His force now consisted of about fifteen hundred men, stationed at Peekskill, on the east side of the Hudson. The defences of this river had employed much of the attention of General Washington, who relied upon them to arrest the progress of the enemy. Fort Independence was the lowest on the eastern side, just above Peekskill; four or five miles higher, on the opposite bank, were Forts Clinton and Montgomery, and about two miles above, on an island near the eastern shore, was Fort Constitution.

Forts Clinton and Montgomery, which may be considered as one, were regarded as the strongest; and various obstructions, defended by two frigates and a galley, were thrown across the river at their base. The garrison consisted of about six hundred men, under the command of Governor Clinton, of New York. Partly with the view of destroying

some military stores collected in the neighborhood, and partly to make a diversion in favor of General Burgoyne, an expedition against these fortresses was undertaken by Sir Henry Clinton.

On the 5th of October, he landed at Verplanck's Point, just below Peekskill, on the east bank of the Hudson, with about three thousand men; and General Putnam retired on their approach to the high grounds in his rear. The next morning, under cover of a fog, a portion of the British crossed the river to Stony Point, and marched unobserved through the mountains in the direction of Forts Montgomery and Clinton. Governor Clinton, at ten o'clock, received the intelligence of their approach, and sent for reinforcements to Putnam, who, believing that Fort Independence was the real object of the enemy, was engaged, as well as the state of the atmosphere would permit, in reconnoitring their position. The express, sent by Clinton, failed to reach him.*

* This failure is attributed by Chief Justice Marshall to the absence of General Putnam for the purpose of reconnoitring, when the messenger arrived. Colonel Humphreys, who was upon the spot, says, that the letter of Clinton miscarried through the treachery of the messenger; that Putnam, astonished at hearing nothing from the enemy, rode to reconnoitre them, and that he (Colonel Humphreys) being alone at head-quarters when the firing began, urged Colonel Wyllys, the senior officer in camp, to send all the men not on duty to Fort Montgomery; which was immediately done, but unhappily too late

At five o'clock in the afternoon, both of the forts were assaulted at the same time by the British. They were resolutely defended until dark, when they were entered by the enemy at various points, and a portion of the garrison made prisoners. The greater number, from their familiar knowledge of the mountain passes, and under cover of the night, effected their escape. No intimation of the assault was received at the camp, until it was made known by the firing on the west bank of the river; a reinforcement of five hundred men was then despatched, but, before they could cross the river, the forts were in possession of the enemy.

In consequence of this disaster, Forts Independence and Constitution were evacuated; General Putnam was compelled to retire to Fishkill; the entire command of the river was lost, and the way was thrown open to Sir Henry Clinton to ascend it. In the course of a week, the arrival of the militia having increased the force of Putnam to six thousand men, he retook Peekskill and the mountain passes, and employed the main body of his troops in watching the progress of the British up the river. While on his march with this design, he received intelligence of the capitulation of Burgoyne, and five thousand men were sent to his aid from the northern army; but, before they arrived, the British had returned to New York.

When the fact of the surrender of Burgoyne had been ascertained by Washington, but before he was aware of the return of Clinton to New York, he suggested to General Putnam the expediency of uniting his forces with those of Gates, to gain, if possible, the rear of the British, and take possession of the city. This was on the 25th of October, several days after the convention of Saratoga, of which Washington had not yet been informed by Gates.

Five days afterwards, when the commander-in-chief had been apprized of the return of the British to New York, Colonel Hamilton, one of his aids-de-camp, in obedience to the decision of a council of war, was despatched by him to Putnam, to direct him to send forward the brigade he had received from the northern army. Having done this, Hamilton proceeded to the camp of Gates, to instruct him to detach a large portion of his force to the vicinity of Philadelphia. The British force in Philadelphia and its neighborhood amounted to ten thousand men; while that of Washington, the militia included, whose stay was very uncertain, did not much exceed that number.

On his return from Albany, Hamilton addressed a letter to General Putnam, expressing his surprise and regret that the orders of the commander-in-chief had not been complied with. This letter was forwarded to Washington by Putnam, with a

complaint that the reflections of Hamilton were illiberal and unjust ; that he was unconscious of having omitted any portion of his duty ; but that, without explicit orders from Washington, he could not think of remaining at his post, and sending his troops away ; the effect of which would certainly be the reinforcement of Howe's army from New York. The course of Hamilton having been in conformity with the orders of Washington, was fully approved by him, and he expressed dissatisfaction at the delay of General Putnam in complying with his orders.

This is the only instance, in which the conduct of General Putnam gave occasion to the censure of his commander ; and it is probably to be attributed to a disposition, which he had long cherished, to attempt a descent upon New York, and a too high estimate of the importance of such an enterprise.

After the departure of the troops, General Putnam moved down the Hudson with a part of his remaining force. When General Dickinson made a descent upon Staten Island, he ordered two brigades to march upon Kingsbridge, in order to divert the attention of the enemy ; but their purpose had been penetrated, and the British withdrew at their approach.

He now took post at New Rochelle, and arranged a plan for attacking the forts at Satauket

and Huntington, on Long Island ; but both were in the mean time evacuated.

This was followed by another enterprise, on a more extensive scale ; the object of which was to destroy the materials collected on Long Island for barracks in New York, together with the ships sent thither to obtain wood from Newport, to attack a regiment stationed about eight miles eastward from Jamaica, and to capture or destroy the public stores. The execution of this scheme was intrusted to General Parsons and Colonel Webb ; the former of whom succeeded in taking a few prisoners, and in destroying a sloop, together with a large quantity of boards and timber ; but the other portions of the enterprise were unsuccessful.

About the middle of December, General Putnam, in obedience to the orders of Washington, returned with his troops to the Highlands, where he spent the winter ; a winter, which was passed by Washington in his dreary encampment at Valley Forge ; in the course of which he wrote, (and a darker picture of suffering could not easily be drawn,) that he had “ no less than two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men in camp unfit for duty, because they were barefoot and otherwise naked.” Nor was the situation of Putnam in any respect more enviable ; his troops

bore their full share of suffering and privation.*

General Washington had never lost sight of the defences of the Hudson; and, on the 25th of January, he urged on General Putnam the necessity of placing them on a respectable footing before the spring. All the old works had been demolished by the British. Early in January the several positions had been examined by Putnam, in company with Governor Clinton and others; all of whom, with the exception of Radière, a French engineer, agreed in selecting West Point, as the best position for a fortress. Colonel Humphreys claims for General Putnam the merit of this selection. However this may be, there can be no doubt that he is entitled to a large portion of the credit, particularly as it was made in opposition to the remonstrances of the engineer, who enjoyed the confidence of Congress and of Washington. Their judgment was confirmed by that of the committee of the Assembly and Council of New York, among whom was Governor Clinton, and the ground was broken in the month of January,

* On the 13th of February, 1778, General Putnam wrote to Washington as follows: "Dubois' regiment is unfit to be ordered on duty, there being not one blanket in the regiment. Very few have either a shoe or a shirt, and most of them have neither stockings, breeches, nor overalls."

by a brigade despatched by Putnam for the purpose.

Congress had directed that an inquiry should be made into the causes of the loss of Forts Clinton and Montgomery ; and General Putnam, who had on the 12th of February returned to Connecticut on a visit to his family, was of course required to attend, as the commander of the army of the Highlands at the time of the disaster ; but the report of the court, constituted for this purpose, attached no blame to any officer. He was, however, superseded in his command ; and the circumstances attending this change demand some notice.

In a letter addressed to him by Washington on the 16th of March, we find the following passage ; “General M^cDougall is to take the command of the army of the Highlands. My reason for making this change is owing to the prejudices of the people, which, whether well or ill grounded, must be indulged ; and I should think myself wanting in justice to the public and candor towards you, were I to continue you in a command, after I have been almost in direct terms informed, that the people of New York will not render the necessary support and assistance, while you remain at the head of that department.”

The complaints to which Washington refers were very general, and had probably their origin

chiefly in the ill success of Putnam's efforts to prevent the incursions of the enemy, and the loss and inconvenience, which were thus occasioned. General Schuyler's history, however, is sufficient to show, that such prejudices are not always well founded in proportion to their violence; though in this instance it was necessary for the commander-in-chief to yield to them, without deciding the question of their justness.

Among the charges urged against him, was that of exercising too much lenity in his treatment of the Tories, and of too great facility in allowing intercourse with the enemy. His situation was certainly a difficult one; his disposition inclined him to alleviate as much as possible the evils resulting both from the civil war which was raging in that quarter, and the contest with the foreign enemy; nor is it certain that a different course would have relieved him from all imputation.

Colonel Humphreys has given us an explanation of these circumstances, which is entitled to much consideration, as proceeding from one, who had every opportunity to ascertain the truth. He declares, that General Putnam became the object of this prejudice in consequence of his humanity, in showing all the indulgence he could, consistently with duty. "He had conceived," adds this writer, "an unconquerable aversion to many of the persons who were intrusted with the disposal

of Tory property, because he believed them to have been guilty of speculation, and other infamous practices. But, although the enmity between him and the sequestrators was acrimonious as mutual, yet he lived in habits of amity with the most respected characters in public departments, as well as in private life." It is difficult at this time to determine the precise weight which should be attached to the charge on one hand, and the vindication on the other; it is sufficient to say, that the former imputed to him no improper design, nor affected in any way the purity of his character.

After the termination of the inquiry, already mentioned, General Putnam was ordered to Connecticut, to hasten the march of the new levies from that quarter. He returned to the camp shortly after the battle of Monmouth, and took the command of the right wing of the army; but no important operation occurred before the retirement of the troops into their winter-quarters, the arrangement for which was made early in November. General Putnam, with three brigades, composed of the Connecticut and New Hampshire troops, and two other regiments, was then stationed at Danbury, in Connecticut.

In the course of the winter, a spirit of insubordination arose among a portion of these troops, which, but for the vigor and promptness of their

commander, might have been attended by the most serious results. The General Assembly of Connecticut was in session at Hartford; and a plan was matured by the brigades belonging to that colony, of marching thither to demand redress of the grievances under which they labored. One of them was already under arms, when the intelligence of their proceedings was brought to General Putnam. He rode instantly to their cantonment, and addressed them with his usual energy, in an appeal which went directly to a soldier's heart; when he concluded, he ordered them to march to their regimental parades and lodge their arms; and the command was instantly obeyed.

In the course of the winter, General Putnam was one day visiting his outposts at West Greenwich, when Governor Tryon, with a corps of fifteen hundred men, was on his march against it. Putnam had with him only one hundred and fifty men, with two pieces of artillery; with these he took his station on the brow of a steep declivity near the meeting-house. The road turned to the north, just before it reached the edge of the steep; after proceeding in this direction for a considerable distance, it inclined to the south, rendering the descent gradual and tolerably safe. As the British advanced, they were received with a sharp fire from the artillery; but, perceiving the dragoons about to charge, Putnam ordered his men to retire

to a swamp, inaccessible to cavalry, while he himself forced his horse directly down the precipice. His pursuers, who were close upon him, paused with astonishment as they reached the edge, and saw him accomplish his perilous descent; and before they could gain the valley by the road, he was far beyond their reach.

The declivity, from this circumstance, has since generally borne the name of Putnam's Hill. He continued his route to Stamford, where he found some militia, with whom, added to his former band, he pursued Tryon on his retreat; and, notwithstanding the inferiority of his force, succeeded in taking about fifty prisoners.

The military career of General Putnam terminated with the campaign of 1779, during which he commanded the Maryland line, stationed near West Point, but was engaged in no important operations. His time was principally occupied in superintending the erection of the new defences of that commanding post. There he remained until the army retired to their winter-quarters at Morristown, when he returned with his family on a visit to Brooklyn, in Connecticut, the place to which his residence had been transferred. As he was journeying towards Hartford on his way back to Morristown, his progress was arrested by an attack of paralysis, by which the use of his limbs on one side was temporarily lost. For a

season, he was reluctant to admit the real character of his disease, and resorted to very active exertion for relief; but the complaint refused to yield to the influences of such a remedy, and he was doomed to pass the remainder of his life in a state of comparative inaction.

In closing the recital of the military services of General Putnam, it would be unjust to his memory to omit a portion of a letter addressed to him by General Washington, in 1783, after the conclusion of the treaty of peace. "I can assure you, that, among the many worthy and meritorious officers, with whom I have had the happiness to be connected in service through the course of this war, and from whose cheerful assistance and advice I have received much support and confidence in the various and trying vicissitudes of a complicated contest, the name of Putnam is not forgotten; nor will be but with that stroke of time, which shall obliterate from my mind the remembrance of all those toils and fatigues, through which we have struggled for the preservation and establishment of the rights, liberties, and independence of our country."

General Putnam survived the close of the war about seven years; a period of repose, strongly contrasted with the animation and vicissitude which had marked his early and maturer life; presenting little incident for his biographer to record, yet forming an appropriate termination of a busy and

adventurous career. His age and bodily infirmities disqualified him for any public occupation, but did not impair his ability to enjoy the tranquil pleasures, that constitute the solace of declining years. He was enabled to take the moderate exercise, which the preservation of his measure of health required; and the vigor of his mind remained unbroken to the last. Fortunately, his early agricultural labors had provided him with a competency, and shielded him from the embarrassment and sorrow, which darkened the old age of many of his brethren of the army of the Revolution; and thus, in the retirement of his family, enjoying the regard of those around him, and the grateful respect of his countrymen, his life gradually wore away. On the 17th of May, 1790, he was suddenly attacked by an inflammatory disease, and foresaw that his end was nigh; the consolations of religion sustained him in his closing hours, and, two days afterwards, he died with resignation and in peace. His remains were borne by his fellow-citizens to the grave with the martial honors due to the memory of a brave and patriotic soldier, and a feeling eulogy was delivered by a neighbor and personal friend.

It only remains for us to say a few words respecting the military and personal character of one, whose history we have thus attempted to delineate. His qualities as a soldier are already

apparent to the reader. Under all circumstances, however critical, he was perfectly fearless and self-possessed, and full of the most active energy and resource at the time when they were most urgently required. No man could surpass him in the fiery charge, of which the success depends so much upon the leader; in this respect he reminds the reader of Murat, the gallant marshal of Napoleon; nor would the general feeling deny him the proud title, by which another of those marshals was distinguished, that of the bravest of the brave. At the same time, as has been already intimated, he was somewhat less successful in the more extended operations, which require the combined action of large and separate masses of men. Yet when it is remembered, that, wholly without military education and with scarcely any other, and simply by the force of his own energy and talent, he rose through all the gradations of the service to the station of first major-general in the army of the United States, till he stood second in rank to Washington alone, no better evidence could be given or required of his capacity and conduct as a soldier. Nor should it be forgotten, that his humanity was always as conspicuous as his bravery; his treatment of the sick and wounded was such as to attract the warm attachment of his own soldiers, and to extort the gratitude of the enemy. He is certainly entitled to the praise of disinterested,

ardent, and successful efforts in the cause of his country ; and he will be long remembered among those who served her faithfully and well, at a season when she wanted either the ability or the inclination to reward their toils and sacrifices.

But the military reputation of General Putnam, high as it was, concealed no dark traits of personal character beneath its shadow. In all the domestic relations, the surest tests of habitual virtue, he was most exemplary ; and his excellence in this respect deserves the more notice, as the stern discipline and wild adventure, in which so much of his life was spent, were more favorable to the growth of severer qualities. His disposition was frank generous, and kind ; in his intercourse with others, he was open, just, sincere, and unsuspecting ; liberal in his hospitality, and of ready benevolence wherever there was occasion for his charity. Those who knew him best were the most forward to express their admiration of his excellence. The late President Dwight, who was his friend, but very unlikely to sacrifice the claims of truth to those of personal regard, has in his writings more than once expressed the sentiment, which he has embodied in the inscription on General Putnam's monument ; that he was " a man, whose generosity was singular, whose honesty was proverbial ; who raised himself to universal esteem, and offices of eminent distinction, by personal worth and a

useful life." Such is the language of others who have borne witness to his private virtues ; and what more needs to be added, than that his moral excellence flowed from a religious fountain, and that the character of a man of worth was adorned and dignified in him by the higher qualities of a Christian ?

LIFE
OF
BARON STEUBEN
BY
FRANCIS BOWEN

BARON STEUBEN

AT the commencement of the American revolution, peace generally prevailed in Europe ; and the consequent want of employment induced many French and German officers to look to this country, as a proper field for the display of military talent. The services of some of them were valuable and important. In a pecuniary point of view, however, the prospect was not a tempting one, for the poverty of Congress was as well known abroad as at home. Most of the adventurers, therefore, who crossed the Atlantic, were led by a desire of fame, or by an enthusiastic wish to engage in a contest for freedom. Such spirits were well adapted to imbibe the republican principles of their American associates, and, on their return home, to carry out these principles to the full extent, by engaging in the domestic troubles, which a long train of events had been preparing in Europe. The names of Lafayette and Kosciuszko, first conspicuously known on this side of the ocean, were destined to become the

watchwords of liberty to their own countrymen. It was well for this country, that jealousy of British power so far blinded the ministers of Louis the Sixteenth, that they could not foresee this result. Without their aid, the contest here might have terminated in 1778, in favor of England, or have been protracted at an expense, for which even the blessings of liberty might, for a time, have proved an inadequate compensation.

The services of foreign officers, important in every respect, were peculiarly valuable in organizing and disciplining the army, introducing a system of military tactics, and creating the engineer and artillery corps. The colonists had been well trained, during the French and Indian wars, in a kind of partisan service, in which long experience had demonstrated their superiority over the regularly disciplined troops of England. But they were now to contend in the European mode of warfare, against organized soldiery in the open field, and in the attack and defence of fortified towns. Their inability to sustain a contest of such a character was taught in a woful lesson, by the campaign of 1776 in New York and the Jerseys. Nothing but the indomitable spirit of the people, and the great prudence and sagacity of the Commander-in-chief, enabled the army to retrieve the losses of this disastrous year. But the skill of the General turned these defeats to so good

an account, that at last they learned from the enemy the art to conquer. The study of tactics was commenced under the instruction of the European volunteers, whose exertions at length placed the regular line on an equal footing, in respect of discipline and military skill, with the English soldiers. No one rendered more important services in this respect, than the subject of the following memoir.

Of the early history of FREDERIC WILLIAM AUGUSTUS, BARON STEUBEN, nothing is known. He was born in some part of Germany, about the year 1730.* We first hear of him in the service of the king of Prussia, with whom he attained the rank of aid-de-camp, and was particularly connected with the Quartermaster-General's department. This arrangement was in conformity with a part of the Prussian system, by which each department had some person near the monarch, to whom the officers directed their requests, and the king applied for any information relative to the condition of the corps.

* A letter from the father of Baron Steuben to Dr. Franklin, making inquiry about his son, which is now before me, is dated at Custrin, in Prussia, October 8th, 1779, and is signed "W. K. von Steuoen, Major and Chevalier of the Order of Merit." In this letter the father says he is eighty-one years old, and his wife seventy-three.

Steuben was not, however, a Prussian by birth ; for on one occasion he was heard to remark, that if he had been a native subject, the great Frederic would certainly have despatched him as a prisoner to Spandau, for daring to request a dismissal from his service. As the Baron possessed a small estate in Suabia, it is not unlikely that he was born in that province.

Steuben was fortunate enough to engage the friendship and confidence of Prince Henry, the King's brother, to whose family he was for some time attached. In an unfortunate campaign, the Prince incurred the displeasure of his inexorable brother. He was ordered to retire from the field, and his suite were placed in situations intended to make them feel the misfortune of being friends to a man, who had dared to displease the King. Steuben was sent into Silesia, with orders to recruit, equip, and discipline, within a certain period, a regiment broken down by long and hard service. The pecuniary allowance was wholly insufficient for the end proposed ; but, in such a service, no intrinsic difficulties could excuse a failure in executing the King's commands. The Baron repaired to the appointed spot, and, by his unwearied exertions, the regiment was marched complete to head-quarters within the time prescribed. This service was performed at an early period, and probably procured the appointment, which he

subsequently held, of aid-de-camp to Frederic himself.

It is not unlikely, that another arbitrary exertion of the royal authority induced him, in 1763, to withdraw from the Prussian service. Perhaps the reduction of the army, consequent on the peace of Hubertsberg, which was ratified this year, may have reconciled Frederic to this proceeding. Steuben did not forfeit the favor of the King, who accepted his resignation with kindness, and gave him, by way of pecuniary reward, a canonry in the cathedral of Havelburg, with a salary of twelve hundred German florins. Frederic relied more on the revenues, than on the spiritual services of the church, and used its funds without scruple to pension off his retired officers. The Baron was certainly well fitted to be a valuable officer in the church militant. He ever retained a strong attachment for his stern old master, and was observed to be much affected, when, in America, he received the news of that monarch's death.

That his military talents were highly esteemed in Prussia is shown by a fact of more recent date. When, in the course of the revolutionary war in this country, Congress applied to the several European courts for a transcript of their military codes, the Prime Minister of Prussia replied, that their military instructions had never been publish-

ed, nor even transcribed, except for the use of the generals. He added, that he was surprised at the request; for he understood that Baron Steuben was employed in the American service, and that no one was better able to give accurate information respecting the minutest details of the Prussian system.

Upon leaving the army, Steuben repaired to his estate of Weilheim, on the borders of Baden and Wurtemberg. As the income of this property, even when united to the emoluments of his ecclesiastical office, was insufficient to maintain him in a style suitable to his rank, he sought employment in a military capacity from some of the German princes. Liberal offers were received from the king of Sardinia, but, by the advice of his friend, Prince Henry of Prussia, these were declined, and he accepted an appointment from the Prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen, who, in 1764, made him Grand Marshal of the court, with a salary of twelve hundred florins. He was at the same period appointed Colonel in the circle of Suabia, an office more honorable than lucrative. The troops of the circle were chiefly militia, and the duty consisted in little else than attending a periodical review.

In 1767, the Prince Margrave of Baden made Steuben a knight of the Order of Fidelity, and soon afterwards gave him the chief command of

the troops, with the title of General, and yearly emoluments to the amount of two thousand florins. As several of the offices enumerated were held at the same time, the situation of the Baron was now so agreeable, that he refused two liberal proffers from the Prime Minister of Austria, to induce him to enter the service of the Emperor.

Steuben retained through life the pride of an old soldier. He always wore the insignia of his order, a star ornamented with gold and diamonds, suspended at the breast of his coat. His military subordinates were obliged to conform strictly to the rules of etiquette, in rendering the outward testimonials of respect due to his office. A little incident, which occurred near the close of the American war, affords an amusing illustration of this amiable weakness.

One day, while at dinner at head-quarters, the Baron happened to express himself with much feeling and energy on some important subject. Gouverneur Morris, who sat at his right hand, was peculiarly struck with the remark, and, in his frank way, slapped Steuben somewhat roughly on the back, and cried out, with an oath, "Well done, General, well done!" Much irritated at the insult, as he deemed it, the old Baron instantly quitted the table, and retired to his marquee, exclaiming, with great warmth, "Confound the fellow! with his old wooden leg, he will govern the whole country."

The situation of Steuben at the courts of Baden and Hohenzollern, for he seems to have divided his time between the two, was sufficiently agreeable. His yearly income, which amounted in all to about five hundred and eighty guineas, afforded ample provision, in that country, for all the expenses that became his rank; while the various offices which he held, employed his time and attention, without being burdensome. He was able to employ a part of each winter in making excursions to France and the principal courts of Germany, where he had a taste of court pleasures, and an opportunity to enlarge his circle of friends. In this way, he formed an acquaintance with the Count de St. Germain, whom he met in Alsace at the house of the Baron de Waldner. In a trip to Montpellier, he was introduced to Prince de Montbarrey; and in 1775 he formed a friendship with several English noblemen, among whom were Lord Spencer and Lord Warwick.

These gentlemen gave him a pressing invitation to come and spend a summer with them in England. Not disinclined to so agreeable a project, he was yet compelled by circumstances to postpone the affair till the year 1777, when he began to think seriously of putting the plan in execution. He went to Paris in April, with the intention of leaving that place for Calais, on his way to London, about the end of June. Having arrived at

Paris, he sent a note to the Count de St Germain, who was then the French Minister of War, testifying a desire to visit him at Versailles. The same evening, Colonel Pagenstecher, a gentleman attached to the court, waited upon Steuben to inform him, that St. Germain desired him not to come to Versailles, but to be at the Arsenal in Paris in the course of a few days, where the Count wished to converse with him on business of importance. As Steuben had no project to execute, nor any favor to ask of the Count, there was a mystery in this proceeding, which he could not fathom. At the interview, however, which occurred at the appointed time and place, all was explained.

The ministers of France had watched with interest the commencement of trouble in the English colonies, and, eager to weaken the power of the rival country, wished to aid the revolutionists as far as they could, without openly compromising themselves with England; a result which they desired to avoid, till the colonists had given better evidence of being able to maintain themselves in the contest. With the privity of the French ministry, arms and money, to a considerable amount, had been shipped to America, and only a mock opposition was made to the wishes of many French officers, who were desirous of enlisting personally in the struggle. Aware of the weak

points of the American army, they were anxious to send over an officer of experience, who might drill the undisciplined troops, and introduce such a system of tactics, as would enable them to contend against a well equipped and organized enemy.

Steuben was peculiarly fitted for this purpose. His military experience was known, and his talents were undoubted. To one, who had served through the seven years' war under the great Frederic, but had now been on a peace establishment for more than fourteen years, the prospect of engaging once more in active service could not be unacceptable. Even if the plan should reach the ears of the British minister resident at Paris, still the Baron was not a Frenchman, and had not been received at court, so that no handle could be made of the affair.

At the arsenal, St. Germain laid the project before Steuben in as flattering colors as possible. The colonists had declared themselves independent, and fought single-handed with Great Britain for more than two years. The French wished to aid them, but the time had not yet come. There was a fair opportunity of acquiring military glory, and he might rely on the gratitude of the young republic for valuable services, rendered at an early and pressing period. The Spanish minister, Count d'Aranda, the Prince de Montbarrey, and finally, Vergennes himself, added the weight of their authority to the proposal of St Germain

On the other hand, Steuben objected the hazard of the enterprise, his time of life, and his ignorance of the English language. Besides, as his personal fortune, independent of the offices which he must resign, was very small, he could not engage in the service without a prospect of adequate remuneration. As the French ministers had no authority to treat upon this point, they referred him to the American envoys then in Paris.

At the house of M. de Beaumarchais, he was introduced to Dr. Franklin and Silas Deane. At the same place, he became acquainted with Peter S. Du Ponceau, then a young man only seventeen years of age, whose services as an interpreter, for he spoke English fluently, were peculiarly valuable.

The envoys showed a desire to enlist the Baron in the American service; but, when the terms were mentioned, a difficulty immediately arose. Mr. Deane was willing to enter into any proper engagement; but Dr. Franklin demurred, and finally said, that he had no authority from Congress to form any contract whatever with a foreign officer, still less to make the required advance of funds to defray the expenses of the voyage. On the contrary, Congress had refused to ratify the conditions, upon which he had already engaged M. Ducoudray and the officers of his suite to embark for America.

To the Baron this answer was decisive; and he

would have resumed his former plans immediately, but for the instances of St. Germain, who was still anxious that the negotiation should not be broken off. By his means the affair was protracted till the middle of July, when Steuben, seeing no prospect of a satisfactory arrangement, and as 't was now too late for his proposed excursion to England, determined to return to Germany.

He accordingly took leave of his Parisian friends, and on the 25th of July set out for Rastadt, with the intention of resuming his employment under the Prince of Baden. But, on his arrival, he found letters from Beaumarchais and St. Germain, informing him that a vessel was then ready to sail for America, and pressing him to return and embark immediately. They assured him, that satisfactory arrangements should be made. After consultation with his friend, Prince William of Baden, the Baron decided to accept the invitation.

He resigned his several offices, and, by consent of the king of Prussia, transferred the canonry, which he held, to his nephew. Early in August he returned to Paris, and had an interview with the French ministers at the house of Vergennes. It was there determined, that, without any stipulation with the American ministers, he should merely obtain from them letters of introduction to Washington and the President of Congress. On his arrival in the United States, if he could not do

otherwise, he was to offer his services as a volunteer, and after exerting himself to the utmost for the success of the cause, was, on the failure of every other chance, to rely on the French court for remuneration. Beaumarchais agreed to furnish the funds which were immediately required for the undertaking.

The French ship *L'Heureux*, of twenty-eight guns, commanded by Captain Landais, who had served under Bougainville in his voyage round the world, was appointed for the expedition. Her name was changed to *Le Flamand*, and she was ostensibly freighted by private individuals for a voyage to Martinique. But her lading really consisted of arms and munitions of war for the American service, and the captain had secret orders to proceed to the United States. The Baron embarked at Marseilles on the 26th of September, under the assumed name of Monsieur de Franck. His suite consisted of M. Du Ponceau, who acted as his private secretary, and three French officers, Romanai, L'Enfant, and Ponthière.

After a rough and dangerous passage, the ship arrived at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on the 1st of December. On their first communication with the shore, they received the news of the capture of Burgoyne, an event of happy omen to Steuben, as it assured him that he had not embarked in a desperate cause.

He wrote immediately to General Washington, enclosing a copy of Dr. Franklin's letter of introduction, and requesting permission to enter the American service, if no other arrangement could immediately be made, in the capacity of a volunteer. "I could say, moreover," he added, "were it not for the fear of offending your modesty, that your Excellency is the only person under whom, after having served under the King of Prussia, I could wish to pursue an art, to which I have wholly given up myself. I intend to go to Boston in a few days, where I shall present my letters to Mr. Hancock, member of Congress, and there I shall wait for your Excellency's orders, according to which I shall take convenient measures."

On the 9th of January, 1778, Washington replied to this letter, and informed Steuben, that it rested entirely with Congress to make suitable provision for him in the army. He must, therefore, proceed to Yorktown, in Pennsylvania, where that body was then convened, lay his credentials before them, and receive their directions for his future conduct. The Baron accordingly set off for Yorktown, where he arrived in February, and, having delivered his letters, was received by the President of Congress with every mark of distinction. The day after his arrival, a committee of five members was appointed to confer with him. Dr. Witherspoon was the chairman of this com-

mütée, and the only one to whom Steuben could explain himself in French.

In answer to the questions of this committee, the Baron stated, that he had entered into no agreement with the Commissioners at Paris ; that he made no demand for rank or pay, but had come to serve as a volunteer in the army, expecting, however, that his expenses would be defrayed in the style that was usual for officers, who had served with distinction in Europe. He was not rich ; and, in order to come to America, had resigned offices in Europe, which gave him an income of six hundred pounds sterling. If his services should not prove acceptable, or if the United States should fail in establishing their independence, he would hold them quit of any obligations to him, either for indemnity or reward. But if the value of his services should be acknowledged by the Commander-in-chief, and the war should have a prosperous issue, he hoped that Congress would restore the money he had advanced, would render him an equivalent for the offices he had resigned, and give him such further compensation as they might deem he had deserved. In the mean time, he expected that the officers of his suite should receive employment suitable to their experience, and to the rank which they had held in Europe. To this end, he requested a major's commission for M. de Romanai ; one of captain

in the engineer corps for M. L'Enfant, and the rank of captain of foot for his secretary, M. Du Ponceau.

As the grant of these terms could not interfere with the rival pretensions of other officers, the committee declared, that they were perfectly satisfied, and made their report to Congress accordingly. That body voted their thanks to Steuben for his disinterested offer, and ordered him immediately to join the army, which was then in winter-quarters at Valley Forge.

On his way to the camp, the citizens of Lancaster, many of whom were Germans, or of German descent, gave a public ball in honor of his arrival. His reputation had preceded him, and all ranks were eager to see and greet the distinguished foreigner, who came to devote his military skill to the cause of American freedom.

The condition of the Continental troops, during the gloomy winter at Valley Forge, is too well known to need description. It was wretched in the extreme. Reduced to a mere handful in point of numbers, half clothed, and ill sheltered from the inclemency of the weather, they owed their preservation to the supineness or ignorance of the enemy. The Baron frequently declared, that no European army could be kept together under such dreadful deprivations. Discipline was relaxed, and the performance of military duties

frequently postponed, from the necessity of employing the soldiers in excursions to procure daily subsistence, or of keeping them housed, because they were too ill clad to endure the open air. As he passed through the cantonment, says his aide-de-camp, the Baron was obliged to see through the open windows and half-closed doors of the huts, the wretched figures of the soldiers, with only a blanket thrown over them, and to hear, at every turn, their complaints for want of pay, clothes, and provisions.

The irregularities of conduct, arising from the want of equipments and necessities, were heightened by the officers' ignorance of military system, and by the short periods for which the men were enlisted. Many were unpractised even in the manual exercise, and none understood the evolutions requisite for the proper arrangement of troops in the open field. Being collected from different States, they had never been trained to any uniform system of tactics. Utter carelessness prevailed in the use of arms and equipments, and great waste was made of their slender means from the want of proper rules, by which accountability for losses might be pushed home to individuals.

Richard Peters, who then belonged to the War Department, affirmed, that it was customary in the estimates of that office, to allow five thousand muskets beyond the actual numbers of the muster

of the whole army. Yet this allowance was never sufficient to guard against the waste and misapplication that occurred. We have the same authority for the assertion, that in the last inspection return of the army, before he left the War Department, Baron Steuben being then Inspector-General, only three muskets were deficient, and those accounted for.

The want of economy in the management of camp equipage, horses, and cavalry and artillery accoutrements, caused the most serious difficulties. Many of those who went home, at the expiration of their term of enlistment, carried with them their arms and military furniture, while the men who came in were entirely unprovided.

When the spring opened, partial supplies were received, and the new levies arrived in considerable numbers. To bring order out of the general confusion, to reduce the raw recruits to a homogeneous mass with the old troops, to accustom the whole to the utmost precision of movement and management of arms, and to yield punctilious obedience to orders, was the hard task assigned to Baron Steuben. He was obliged to instruct equally the officers and the men ; the former to lead, and the latter to follow, in intricate evolutions, with which all were alike unacquainted. His difficulties were increased by his ignorance of the English language. His secretary, Du Ponceau, who

might have aided him in this point, was sick and absent from the army.

At the first parade, the troops neither understanding the command, nor being able to follow in movements to which they had not been accustomed, were getting fast into confusion. At that moment, Captain Walker, then of the fourth New York regiment, advanced from the line, and offered his assistance to translate the orders and give them out to the troops. "If I had seen an angel from heaven," said the Baron, many years after, "I should not have been more rejoiced. Perhaps there was not another officer in the army, (unless Hamilton be excepted,) who could speak French and English, so as to be well understood in both." Walker became his aid-de-camp, and in future was hardly ever absent from his side.

Still, as the Baron slowly acquired our language, his eagerness and warmth of temper would frequently involve him in difficulties. On such occasions, after exhausting all the execrations he could think of in German and French, he would call upon his faithful aid for assistance. "Venez, Walker, mon ami ! Sacre, de gaucherie of desebadauts, je ne puis plus. I can curse dem no more."

A temporary department of inspection was organized, and the Baron was placed at its head. Trained under so expert a tactician as the great

Frederic, he was well qualified for the service and entered upon it with great earnestness. From the moment that instruction began, no time or pains were spared to promote the object he had in view. Whenever the troops were to manœuvre, and this was every fair day, the Baron rose at three o'clock in the morning, and, while the servant dressed his hair, he smoked, and drank one cup of strong coffee. At sunrise he was on horseback, and, with or without his suite, galloped to the parade ground. There was no waiting for a tardy aid, and one who came late was sufficiently punished by a reproachful look for the neglect of duty.

The labor of inspection was always performed with the utmost care. Dr. Thacher in his "Military Journal" describes a scene, showing how great attention was paid to the minutest details. "The troops were paraded in a single line, with shouldered arms, every officer in his particular station. The Baron first reviewed the line in this position, passing in front with a scrutinizing eye; after which he took into his hand the musket and accoutrements of every soldier, examining them with particular accuracy and precision, applauding or condemning, according to the condition in which he found them. He required, that the musket and bayonet should exhibit the brightest polish; not a spot of rust, or defect in any part,

could elude his vigilance. He inquired also into the conduct of the officers towards their men, censuring every fault, and applauding every meritorious action. Next, he required of me, as surgeon, a list of the sick, with a particular statement of their accommodations and mode of treatment, and even visited some of the sick in their cabins." *

The value of Steuben's services was soon apparent, in the improved condition of the troops, and was fully appreciated by Washington. On the 30th of April, when the Baron had been with the army but a few weeks, the Commander-in-chief wrote to Congress, attesting his merits in strong terms, and recommending him to receive immediately a permanent appointment. The following is an extract from the letter.

"I should do injustice, if I were to be longer silent with regard to the merits of Baron Steuben. His knowledge of his profession, added to the zeal which he has discovered since he began upon the functions of his office, leads me to consider him as an acquisition to the service, and to recommend him to the attention of Congress. His expectations with respect to rank extend to that of major-general. His finances, he ingenuously confesses, will not admit of his serving without the incidental emoluments; and Congress, I presume, from his character, and their own knowledge

* Thacher's *Military Journal*, 2d ed. p. 160.

of him, will without difficulty gratify him in these particulars."

In conformity with this recommendation, the Baron, on the 5th of May, was appointed inspector-general of the army, with the rank of major-general; his pay to commence at the time of his joining the army. The department of inspection, which hitherto had been on a temporary footing, was now arranged on a permanent basis. Two ranks of inspectors were appointed; the lowest were charged with the inspection of brigades, and were chosen by the field-officers of the body to which they belonged. Over these were placed, as sub-inspectors, five officers with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Among these were two French gentlemen, Ternant and Fleury, whose knowledge of both French and English made them necessary assistants to Baron Steuben.

The duty of the inspectors was to superintend the exercise and discipline of the troops, and to assist in the execution of all field manœuvres, especially in time of action. They reviewed and inspected the number and condition of the men, and the state of their arms and accoutrements, and reported to the Commander-in-chief any loss or damage, and by what means it had occurred. To this end, they were furnished with blank returns, so that minute accounts were kept, and not a brush or picker could be missing without the

responsibility for its loss falling upon an individual.

These various arrangements were projected and matured with great labor by Steuben himself, and in their operation were productive of the happiest effects. Much unnecessary expense was avoided, and habits of order and carefulness were introduced throughout the army.

In the exercise and discipline of the troops, the plans of the Baron were equally successful. The European systems were too minute and complicated to be literally adopted, and were therefore varied and accommodated with great skill to the condition of the army. The regimental officers had written instructions relative to their several functions, and the manœuvres were illustrated by a company which the Baron himself trained.

Much embarrassment was experienced in carrying the system into effect, from the want of clothing and arms. Colonel Fleury, who had been sent to Wilmington to discipline the troops under General Smallwood, writes to Steuben on the 13th of May, giving a mournful picture of the condition of the troops. Many of them, from their utter nudity, could not appear on the ground. "Most of the recruits are unprovided with shirts, and the only garment they possess is a blanket elegantly twined about them. You may judge, Sir, how much this apparel graces their appearance on parade."

Notwithstanding such difficulties, the success of Baron Steuben's efforts was such, that, little more than a year afterwards, in a letter to Dr Franklin at Paris, he wrote as follows respecting the condition of the troops.

"I leave it to your other correspondents to give you an account of the present state of our army. If they tell you, that our order and discipline equals that of the French and Prussian armies, do not believe them. But do not believe them either, if they compare our troops to those of the Pope; take a just medium between these two extremes. Though we are so young that we scarce begin to walk, we have already taken Stony Point and Paulus Hook, at the point of the bayonet, without firing a single shot. This is very premature; yet we still have many weaknesses which bespeak our infancy. We want, above all, the true meaning of the words *liberty*, *independence*, &c., that the child may not make use of them against his father, or the soldier against his officer."*

The Baron was particularly attentive to the personal appearance of the men, and never allowed any instance of care or negligence in this

* The Baron always wrote his letters in French, but those to his English correspondents were translated by his aids.

respect to pass without immediate praise or censure. On one occasion, when reviewing Colonel Jackson's regiment, he noticed in the ranks a very spruce young lad, handsomely formed, standing erect with a soldierly air, and his gun and equipments in perfect order. Patting him under the chin, to raise his head still more, the Baron viewed him with a smile, and asked him how old he was. "Seventeen, Sir." Steuben asked him several other questions, how long he had been a soldier, and whether he had a wife; then turning to the commander, said, "Colonel Jackson, this is one fine soldier in miniature."

Dr. Thacher relates another anecdote, which displays in a pleasing manner Steuben's rigid sense of justice. "I recollect, that at a review near Morristown, a Lieutenant Gibbons, a brave and good officer, was arrested on the spot, and ordered into the rear, for a fault, which it afterwards appeared another had committed. At a proper moment, the commander of the regiment came forward and informed the Baron of Mr. Gibbons's innocence, of his worth, and of his acute feelings under this unmerited disgrace. 'Desire Lieutenant Gibbons to come to the front, Colonel.' 'Sir,' said the Baron to the young gentleman, 'the fault which was made by throwing the line into confusion, might, in the presence of an enemy, have been fatal. I arrested you as its supposed

author ; but I have reason to believe that I was mistaken, and that in this instance you were blameless. I ask your pardon ; return to your command. I would not deal unjustly by any, much less by one, whose character as an officer is so respectable.' All this passed with the Baron's hat off, the rain pouring on his venerable head."

Steuben was particularly anxious, that the higher officers should not think it beneath them to attend to the minutiae of the drill, even to instructing the men singly in the proper use of their arms. As we have seen, he trained one company himself, that it might serve as a model to the others, and that his example might have weight with his brother officers. Learning the more complicated manœuvres was necessarily postponed to the necessity of making the troops perfect in the simpler operations, and enabling them, on the field of battle, to display or fold a column, or change a front with ease and correctness. "We have not time," said Steuben, "to do all. The business is, to give our troops a relish for their trade, to make them feel a confidence in their own skill. Your officers, following the miserable British sergeant system, would think themselves degraded by an attention to the drill. But the time will come, when there will be a better mode of thinking. Then we will attend to turning out the toes."

This prophecy, observes one of his aids, was a

year or two afterwards literally fulfilled. "Do you see that, Sir?" said Steuben, "there is your colonel, instructing that awkward recruit. I thank God for that."

On the 18th of June, Baron Steuben left the encampment to visit Congress at Yorktown. He carried with him a highly complimentary letter from Washington to the President of Congress. He had made very extensive arrangements in the army, and his object was now to obtain a sanction of his proceedings from the Board of War. Having succeeded in this end, he returned to the army, to take his share of active duty in the campaign of 1778.

Late in June of this year the British troops evacuated Philadelphia, and a council of war was held, in the American army, to decide upon the propriety of attacking them in their retreat. The general opinion was in favor of sending a detachment to attack the enemy's rear, while the main body should take a proper position, to act as circumstances might require. But opinions differed respecting the strength of the detachment. Steuben, with others, was in favor of a strong body being sent for this purpose, and their views coincided with the judgment of Washington.

The arrangement was carried into effect, and it produced the battle of Monmouth, which was fought on the 28th of June. To the valuable improvements, which Steuben had introduced into

all the ranks of the army, among other causes, the successful issue of this action is undoubtedly to be ascribed. Colonel Hamilton declared, that he had never known nor conceived the value of military discipline until that day.

As he had no command in the line, Steuben was employed during the action in forming the troops and reconnoitring the enemy. In this last service, he narrowly escaped being taken. His report to Washington of the unaccountable retreat of the van, commanded by General Lee, called forth some expressions from that officer, of which the Baron, prompt to take offence, demanded immediate explanation. Lee was already involved in difficulties enough, and he made the required apology in satisfactory terms.

It is pleasant to see the little courtesies of life exchanged between members of contending armies. We find Steuben writing to his countryman, General Knyphausen, then serving under Sir Henry Clinton, and requesting him to extend some favors to Mr. Garoutti, a young gentleman who had been made prisoner by the British. In a very polite reply, Knyphausen informed the Baron, that after some search he had discovered the person in question, had supplied him with necessaries and every thing that he desired, and would take care, that he should be included in the first general exchange of prisoners. Such little events as this alleviate the painful feelings that naturally arise, when we

see those who were born on the same soil, engaged in opposite parties in war, and both in the service of strangers.

In July of this year, Steuben became desirous of exchanging his office of inspector-general for a command of the same rank in the regular line. As his labors had established the department of inspection on a regular footing, and no other duty now remained to him but that of a general superintendence, he naturally wished for a more active life, and an opportunity to acquire fame by commanding troops on distinct operations. Circumstances had enabled Washington to gratify this wish to a small extent. When the main army marched from Brunswic, as there were but few major-generals, and most of the brigadiers were in attendance at the court-martial held for the trial of General Lee, the Baron was appointed to conduct one wing of the army to the North River.

Though this arrangement was temporary, and so expressed in the general orders, it created some uneasiness among the brigadier-generals. They had willingly seen the rank of major-general given to Steuben, because, as he was appointed to a distinct department, it could not interfere with their own claims to promotion. But they did not wish to have the number of superior officers in actual service increased, as it would diminish their own chance of rising by seniority.

Perplexities of this kind were continually multiplying around the Commander-in-chief, and nothing but his great prudence enabled him to parry them, without any serious injury resulting to the service. When Steuben left the army to lay his desire before Congress, Washington wrote in the plainest terms to the President of that body. After bearing the most ample testimony to the merits of the Baron, he declared himself altogether averse to the claim, which could not be granted, without serious difficulties being the immediate result.

But, as he opposed the Baron's wishes in this respect, so he coincided entirely with them in another. A doubt had arisen respecting the Baron's supremacy in his own department. His commission made him inspector-general to the whole army. But Monsieur Neuville had received a commission expressed in similar terms for the army then commanded by Gates, and under this he denied any subordination to Steuben.

Congress accepted the advice of Washington in both respects. They confirmed the Baron's absolute authority in the department of inspection, but passed silently over his request to be transferred to the line. After fairly making the attempt, Steuben was discreet and disinterested enough to let the matter rest, and apply himself with new zeal to his old duties. Congress re-

requested him to repair to Rhode Island, and give his advice and assistance to General Sullivan in the attack, which was then meditated on the British troops in that quarter.

In accordance with this request, Steuben set off immediately, but arrived too late to have any share in Sullivan's active operations. The French fleet, under D'Estaing, which was designed to coöperate with the land forces, had been obliged to sail for Boston to repair the injury received in a violent storm, and the troops were so much disheartened by this event, that they deserted in great numbers. Sullivan was compelled to break up his camp before Newport, and retire to the northern part of the island, and thence, after an indecisive engagement, to the main land. After remaining with Sullivan for some time, to assist him in getting the troops into order, and making the necessary arrangements to prevent the incursions of the British, Steuben returned to the main army.

In the choice of aids and officers immediately connected with him in his department, the Baron was peculiarly fortunate. The little family that they formed for him, and the mutual affection and confidence that prevailed among its members, gave him, bachelor as he was, and residing in a strange land, all the comforts of domestic life. He was in the habit of breakfasting in his own apartment, but frequently paid the mess-room of his officers

a visit while they were engaged at that meal, which was always composed of the best materials that could be obtained, at the Baron's sole cost. On such occasions, he did not suffer his affection for the men to interfere with his zeal for the service. If either of the gentlemen had protracted his morning's sleep too long to appear at that time in trim to mount on horseback, he was immediately despatched on duty, without the slightest regard to the breakfast table. But the Baron was seldom driven to this necessity.

Walker and Du Ponceau have been already mentioned. Ternant had been sent to the south, to introduce the system of inspection and discipline among the troops commanded by General Howe, and afterwards by General Lincoln. He was in the army of Howe at the time that officer was defeated in Georgia. This disaster, the unhealthiness of the climate, and the difficulty of introducing any system into an army, which was one day composed of half-disciplined troops, and the next of militia not disciplined at all, seem to have disgusted him with the situation. In his letters to the Baron, written in a deep spirit of affection and respect, he betrays his earnest desire to return to the north, and serve again under the eye of his old commander.

Captain William North was another of the aids, and between him and the Baron existed an attach-

ment like that of father and son. This officer had served as a volunteer, in 1775, under General Arnold, in the expedition through the wilderness from Kennebec to Canada. He afterwards received the command of a company in Colonel Jackson's regiment, and served in that capacity till he was appointed aid-de-camp to Baron Steuben. Deeply sensible of the kindness with which he had been treated in this relation, and of the many tokens of affection that he had received in other respects, he continued, during the long period in which he survived Steuben, to cherish his memory with almost idolatrous regard.

I have thought, that this little account of the members of the Baron's family would not be misplaced here, as it throws a strong light on his excellent character. No ordinary qualities of mind and heart are required to create such a deep-rooted affection to a superior officer and a foreigner, as was manifested by Ternant, Walker, and North towards Steuben. To behold such kindly feelings springing up in the harsh soil of a camp, and flourishing in despite of the cold air of jealous rivalry and a punctilious regard to forms, which usually prevail in such a quarter, is a pleasing but rare occurrence.

During the autumn of 1778, the Baron was occupied in a work of much importance, for the completion and regular observance of the rules of

discipline and inspection. Hitherto, the system had been extended to the troops acting in separate and remote sections of the country, by means of officers despatched for the purpose, who had previously learned and practised the rules, under the eye of Steuben himself. To this end, Ternant had been sent to the southern army, where he was soon afterwards joined by L'Enfant. To introduce more perfect uniformity, so that the troops when brought together might not be perplexed by little differences in their previous mode of training, it seemed advisable, that a manual should be prepared and printed for distribution among the proper officers. It was especially requisite for the guidance of officers employed in raising recruits and sending them in small parties to the main army, that they might not arrive wholly unpractised in their new duties.

Baron Steuben engaged in the work at the request of Washington and the Board of War. The difficulties in the way of executing the project were great. From his imperfect acquaintance with the English language, the work was originally composed in French, and the manuscript then translated into English by his aids or persons connected with the War Department, who were not well acquainted with military phrases and duties. No treatise on military science could be obtained, to serve as a basis for the work. Every thing

had to be drawn from the Baron's recollections of the Prussian system, and then modified to suit the peculiar condition of the American troops.

It is no small praise of a work executed under such disadvantages, that it was immediately approved by the Commander-in-chief, relied upon for direction during the remainder of the war, and that it continued to be in use as the only authority for disciplining the militia of the several States down to a late period. For this purpose, the work was republished in many of the States.

It was written with such conciseness, that, though it contained minute directions on a great variety of subjects, it was comprised in a small volume of about one hundred and fifty pages. The completed manuscript was submitted to the perusal of Washington on the 26th of February 1779. Congress adopted it by a resolution dated on the 29th of March. But the publication was so much delayed, from the want of engravers competent to execute the plates, that the Baron's patience was severely tried. Colonel Pickering, who superintended the passage of the work through the press, wrote to Steuben, announcing its publication, on the 19th of June. The following is an extract from the letter.

"I am obliged by your kind expressions of friendship and esteem, and shall ever account it an honor to be ranked among your friends. Should

I again discover marks of extreme impatience and even asperity in the inspector-general, I will impute them to his anxiety to introduce a perfect order and discipline in the army, and to his zeal for securing the safety and independence of America."

The Baron was precise, and apt to be sufficiently testy about delays and imperfections for which he could not account. But his general goodness of heart is attested, not only by the enthusiastic attachment which his officers bore to him, but by many little incidents, which, trifling as they are, form the most satisfactory proof of an amiable disposition. An anecdote, related more than half a century after the event happened, by Major Popham, who became a member of Steuben's family in 1781, will illustrate this point.

The Baron brought with him from Europe a beautiful Italian grey-hound, named Azor, to which he was much attached. This dog was a genius in his way. He had been instructed in music, and often performed his part on the gamut, much more to his own and his master's delight, than to the satisfaction of the bystanders. "In the month of August, 1782," writes Major Popham, "the Baron had occasion to review the invalid corps at Fishkill. He and I rode out in his carriage for this purpose, and returning in the afternoon, Azor in attendance, we were over

taken by a violent storm, which made the roads exceedingly muddy. The day being warm, the leeward glass of the carriage was put down. While the coachman pressed his horses to their full speed, the rascally Italian, unwilling to bear any longer the pattering of the rain, made a flying spring through the window, and lighted directly on our new regimentals, which we had purchased but a short time before in Philadelphia. Of course, both of us were reduced to the most deplorable plight. My ire rose very fast, but the Baron's temper was unmoved. He laughed very heartily, and contented himself with telling Azor that he was a rascal, and making him crouch down at his feet."

Our readers will pardon another anecdote of Azor, though a little out of place. I quote from a manuscript communication of Mr. Du Ponceau, who, as we have seen, accompanied Steuben on his voyage from France. "This dog was fond of music; and, when on board the ship, he would listen with great attention and apparent pleasure to the sailors' songs. While they or anybody else was singing, he stood all the time *arrectis auribus*, not losing a single note. Unfortunately, Captain Landais was also fond of music, but had the most dismal, and at the same time, false voice, that nature ever bestowed on man for the torment of delicate ears. Nevertheless, the good captain took it into his

head to learn vocal music, and for want of a better, I was selected to be his teacher. We now began to go through the musical scale, *do, re, mi, fa*, &c. ; but poor Azor, *dilettante* as he was, could not bear the harsh sounds that issued from my pupil's voice. As soon as we began the gamut, he set up such lamentable yells that we were soon compelled to abandon our melodious exercise. The dog, nevertheless, continued to listen to other music, and did not lose his taste for that delightful art. But the gamut he never afterwards would bear ; the moment any one began with *do, re, mi, fa*, he commenced his terrible howl, and nothing would quiet him but some tune more to his taste. The captain pronounced, that the dog had no ear for music ; but he was greatly mortified, that the animal's taste did not coincide with his own. The passengers, however, were of a different opinion ; and Azor had my warm thanks for relieving me from the painful task to which our gallant commander had subjected me."

On the 15th of August, 1779, Steuben left the main army on a visit to Providence, in order to introduce among the troops under General Gates the rules, which had been adopted in the main body. He remained at Providence but a short period, being ordered to Boston to receive, and accompany to head-quarters, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, who had just landed as minister from

France to Congress. The route assigned for the journey lay through New Haven and Fairfield, in Connecticut. But, on the 8th of September, we find Colonel Hamilton writing in some anxiety to Steuben, to induce him to change the route; for, as the British had troops on Long Island, a body of men might easily be thrown across the Sound, and the whole party might have their dreams disagreeably interrupted by a call to attend the levee of Sir Henry Clinton. The journey was made, however, without accident, and the Chevalier was received at the main army with the honors due to his station.

On this and other occasions, the Baron had received more than the regular salary of his office, as established by Congress. The nature of his duties, which required him frequently to travel from one part of the army to another, occasioned extra expense, and, in the opinion of Washington, justified an extra allowance. But there were other causes which increased Steuben's pecuniary difficulties.

His hand was ever open to the calls of distress, and on all occasions he found it difficult to resist his inclination to give, or to have any prudent regard to the extent of his means. As it does not appear that he received any remittance from Europe during the war, he was entirely dependent on his allowance from Congress for his own support

and the exercise of his liberal feelings. General Washington was sensible of his merit, and urged the authorities on all proper occasions in his behalf. In truth, considering the poverty of the country, he was treated with a commendable degree of liberality. But hardly any sum was too great for his necessities.

Never did a review pass, without rewards being given to soldiers, whose attention to the state of their arms and equipments was most conspicuous. Never was his table unfurnished with guests, if furnished with provisions. Officers of the higher ranks, men most prominent for their attention to duty, were principally his guests; but the gentlemen of his family were desired to complete the list with others of inferior rank. "Poor fellows," said he; "they have field officers' stomachs, without their pay or rations."

On one occasion at the South, he sold a part of his camp equipage, in order to give an entertainment to the officers of the allied army. "We are constantly feasted by the French," said he, "without their receiving any invitation in return, except from head-quarters. I can stand it no longer. I will give one grand dinner to our allies, should I eat my soup with a wooden spoon for ever after."

The month of February, 1780, was spent by Baron Steuben at Philadelphia, in concerting

measures with the Board of War, to place the army on a proper footing for the campaign of the ensuing summer. From the peculiar manner in which he had been employed, he could furnish accurate information respecting the state and number of the troops, and suggest what steps were requisite to meet the coming exigencies of the war. As a large force was expected from France in the course of the summer, it was absolutely necessary, that the strength and effectiveness of the American forces should be increased, that the allies might not be discouraged at the first sight of the army with which they were to coöperate. Steuben was fortunate enough, in the measures he proposed, to obtain the approbation of Washington.

The return of Lafayette to the United States in April, bringing intelligence that a naval and land armament might soon be expected from France, caused the preparations already commenced, to be carried on with renewed vigor. A circular letter was despatched to the governors of the several States, urging them to complete their quotas of troops, to provide magazines of provisions and arms, and prepare for calling out the militia at any moment.

In this way, though the proceedings of the States were dilatory to the last degree, much was accomplished. But unfortunately, from the arri-

val of a reinforcement to the British fleet at New York, the French lost their superiority at sea, and all the extraordinary preparations availed nothing towards the attainment of any considerable object. The French under Count Rochambeau landed in Rhode Island, but were sufficiently occupied in preparations for their own defence.

Baron Steuben continued at West Point, though not in actual command at that post, to give his advice and assistance to General Howe, when an attack from the British was apprehended. As many French officers, who were old acquaintances of the Baron, visited this post, he had much pride in showing them the discipline and military expertness, which the American troops had attained under his instructions. Many parades were ordered, and the allied officers remarked with astonishment the adroitness and silence, with which the manœuvres were performed. This last particular excited the more surprise, as the French troops were noisy in their marches and evolutions. "Noise?" exclaimed the Baron to General Montmorency, who was remarking upon this point, "I do not know where the noise should come from, when even my brigadiers dare not open their mouths, but to repeat my orders."

On a subsequent occasion, when a violent storm had caused a grand exhibition to be postponed, Steuben was asked by one of the French generals

who had retired with him to his marquee, what manœuvres he had intended to perform. On being told, the officer mentioned an addition of some difficulty, which he had seen practised by the Prussians in Silesia. "But we do not expect you to equal the veteran army of the King of Prussia. All in good time."

"The time shall be next week," said the Baron, after his guests had retired; "I will save the gentlemen, who have not been in Silesia, the trouble of going any farther than Verplanck's Point for instruction." The order for the review was brought, and one of the aids wrote, as Steuben dictated. The appointed day came, and, amid a large concourse of officers, the proposed evolutions were performed with great precision.

The Baron was with the main army in the months of September and October, 1780, a period signalized by the treason of Arnold, and the capture of André. By a wise precaution, the court for the trial of this unfortunate captive was composed in part of foreign officers, Lafayette and Steuben being appointed members. Their decision sealed the fate of André, and crowned the infamy of the wretched being, who, as the cause of sacrificing a brother officer and a man of honor, must have been as much detested in the British as in the American camp.

Steuben never failed to manifest the utmost ab-

horrence of the name and character of the traitor. An anecdote, told by one of his aids, displays the depth of his feelings on this point. As he was reviewing Colonel Sheldon's regiment of light horse, on the call of the muster-roll, the offensive appellation of Benedict Arnold met his ear. The person who bore the name, a private, was immediately called to the front. He was a fine looking man, with his horse and equipments in perfect order. "Change your name, brother soldier," said the Baron; "you are too respectable to bear the name of a traitor." "What name shall I take, General?" "Take any other; mine is at your service." The offer was gladly accepted, the odious appellation erased from the roll, and that of Frederic William Steuben inserted in its place. As a christening present, the Baron immediately settled upon him a perpetual pension of five dollars a month, and, after some years, the gift of a considerable tract of land was added. After the close of the war, the soldier met Steuben, and informed him that he was well settled, and had a wife and son. "I have called my son after you, Sir." "I thank you, my friend; what name have you given the boy?" "I called him *Baron*; what else could I call him?"

The ardent desire of Steuben to engage in more active service, with a separate command, was now to be gratified. The defeat of Gates at

Camden, on the 16th of August, had entirely exposed the southern country to the operations of the army under Cornwallis. The most strenuous exertions were required to prevent its entire loss. In October, General Greene was appointed to the command at the South, and all the troops raised in the southern States were destined for his support. Baron Steuben was ordered to accompany Greene, to render aid in arranging and disciplining the raw troops, who were to form the bulk of the army. He was also appointed to preside at the court of inquiry into the conduct of Gates; but this affair was delayed from day to day, and finally suffered to drop.

General Greene arrived at Richmond about the middle of November. He immediately perceived, that Virginia could be defended only in the Carolinas; that, if the British forces in those States were not kept in constant action, the whole country up to the Potomac must fall into their power. The eastern part of Virginia was extremely unfavorable for operations against an enemy, who had the command at sea. Intersected by numerous rivers and creeks, difficult for troops to pass, the British could send a naval force far into the country, and effectually hem in their opponents.

With these views, Greene resolved to leave Baron Steuben the command in Virginia, and to go himself to the southward, to cope with Corn-

wallis. The Baron was instructed to use the utmost exertions in enlisting troops in every part of the State, to form and discipline them as much as possible, and then to send them, together with what stores and provisions he could collect, to the support of Greene. The British general Leslie still occupied Portsmouth, but with a force too small to act on the offensive. Steuben received discretionary powers to act against him, but was advised to remain chiefly on the defensive, with the view of forwarding every man, that could be spared, to the Carolinas. Definite instructions were also given him respecting the establishment of armories and the conduct of the ordnance department.

An odious task was thus imposed upon Steuben at the beginning, and one which required no small judgment and prudence, as well as military skill, to perform with success. At the risk of creating dissatisfaction, he was obliged to disfurnish the State for the time being, in the hope of securing its permanent safety. Knowing their dangerous situation, the Virginians could not willingly behold the voluntary diminution of their resources. In a letter to Governor Jefferson, Greene explained his views respecting the conduct of the war, and labored to convince him of their propriety. He recommended the Baron in strong terms, and claimed for him the aid and coöperation of the State executive.

The departure of General Leslie from the State, on the 24th of November, left at liberty for other operations, a body of troops amounting to about nine hundred. Steuben ordered them to Petersburg, that they might be equipped and sent immediately to the South. But they were found so destitute of necessaries, that with great labor only four hundred could be fitted out and despatched under Colonel Green. The others were ordered to Chesterfield Court-House, and the Baron exerted himself to procure for them articles of equipment.

The resources of the State had been greatly exhausted, and, with all the exertions of Governor Jefferson, recruits came in but slowly, and the proper stores were with difficulty collected. The Baron's zeal did not permit him on every occasion to act with proper mildness and caution.

At one time, a man on horseback, with a well-mounted lad in attendance, rode up, and, introducing himself to the Baron as a colonel in the militia, said that he had brought a recruit. Steuben thanked him, at first, but his countenance changed, when he found, that the recruit was no other than the boy in attendance. A sergeant was ordered to measure him, and found, when his shoes were taken off, something by which his height had been increased. The Baron patted the child's head, with a hand trembling with rage, and asked him

how old he was. He was very young, quite a child. "Sir," said Steuben to the militia colonel, "do you think me a rascal?" "Oh no, Baron, I do not." "Then, Sir, I think you are one, an infamous scoundrel, thus to attempt to cheat your country." Then speaking to an officer at his side; "Take off this colonel's spurs, place him in the ranks, and tell General Greene from me, that I have sent him a man able to serve, instead of an infant whom he would basely have made his substitute. Go, my boy; carry the colonel's horse and spurs to his wife; make my respects to her, and tell her, that her husband has gone to fight, as an honest citizen should, for the liberty of his country."

This was rather a high-handed proceeding; and the officer commanding the detachment, fearing the consequences, suffered the man to escape. He immediately applied to the Governor for redress; but the purity of Steuben's motives was known, and the matter was passed over in silence.

The quota of troops fixed by Congress to complete the Virginia line amounted nearly to six thousand. But the Assembly, after much debate, voted to raise only three thousand, and the draft was appointed for the 10th of February, 1781. Before any thing was done, however, the attention of Baron Steuben and the energies of the State were directed to another object by a new invasion of the enemy, commanded by the traitor Arnold

On the 30th of December, information was transmitted to Governor Jefferson, that a naval armament, amounting in all to twenty-seven sail, had entered the capes of the Chesapeake. General Nelson was immediately sent to the lower country to the north of James River, with orders to call out the militia there, and act as exigencies should require.

Steuben was at Chesterfield, and did not receive certain news of the enemy's approach till the 2d of January. From the distressed situation of the Continental troops, at that place, only one hundred and fifty men could be fitted out, who were sent to protect the public stores at Petersburg, then supposed to be the destination of Arnold. The Baron afterwards waited on the Governor and Council at Richmond, and it was determined by them to issue a call for four thousand militia.

The British passed up James River without opposition, till they arrived, on the 3d of January, at Hood's, where a small battery had been erected. A few shot were fired at them here; but the garrison, amounting only to seventy men, were obliged to leave the post, when the enemy landed some troops and destroyed the guns. On the 4th, they landed at Westover, twenty-five miles below Richmond, which now appeared to be the object of attack. No force had as yet been collected, as the call for the militia was issued only

two days before. But great exertions were made to remove the records, arms, and military stores to the south side of the river, which object was in a great degree accomplished. Most of the stores were sent to Westham, seven miles from Richmond, where they were ferried across the river, and guarded by the small body of Continentals.

Arnold had with him about sixteen hundred effective men. Of these, he landed nine hundred at Westover, and with them commenced his march, on the afternoon of the 4th, to Richmond, which place he reached at noon on the following day. Baron Steuben despatched one or two hundred militia, all that could be collected, to harass the British on the march, but the service was ill performed, and they entered the capital without the loss of a man. Arnold with five hundred men remaining in the town, Colonel Simcoe with the remainder pushed forward to Westham, where he burned a valuable foundry, boring-mill, laboratory, and some smaller buildings. Five brass four-pounders, which had been sunk in the river, were discovered, raised, and carried off, and six tons of powder were thrown into the water. But, as they had no means of crossing the river, the major part of the stores were out of their reach, and Simcoe returned immediately to Richmond.

Arnold sent a flag to Steuben, offering not to burn the town, if the ships should be allowed to

pass up unmolested, and carry off the tobacco, which was there deposited. This proposition was rejected ; and the enemy, concluding to leave the tobacco, after burning the public buildings and plundering many private houses, commenced their retreat to Westover, where they arrived on the 7th. In about forty-eight hours, they had passed thirty miles into the country, occupied the capital of the State, destroyed much public property, and returned to their shipping without the loss of a man.

Deeply sensible of the insult thus received, Steuben strained every nerve to collect troops, and harass the British on their passage down the river. He had drawn what force he could to Manchester, with a view to prevent them from passing to the south side of the river, where they might have committed serious damage. General Smallwood, with a small party of militia, had defeated an attempt made by a detachment of the enemy to pass up the Appomatox, a river emptying into James River, a little above Westover, and destroy some private shipping.

Rightly judging, that Arnold's force would land again at Hood's, on their passage down, Steuben ordered Colonel Clarke to form an ambuscade with two hundred militia, at a short distance from the landing-place. On the 10th, the shipping anchored at the place, and a party of five hundred men landed, who drove in the American picket.

When they came within forty paces of the arbuscade, the militia poured in a general fire, which killed seven men and wounded twenty-three others. The British returned the fire without effect, and then pushed forward with fixed bayonets, when the militia immediately fled. The party reëmbarked, carrying with them the guns, which they had disabled at their former landing.

Simcoe had been detached with a party of horse to Charles City Court-House, where he surprised a body of militia, killed one, and took several prisoners. In this way, Arnold's force fell slowly down the river, occasionally landing parties to destroy public and private property, but affording no opportunity to Steuben to make an attack with any prospect of success. At Cobham, they carried off some tobacco, and at Smithfield and Mackay's Mills, they destroyed some stores. Parties of militia followed them to each place, but in too small numbers to hazard an attack.

On the 20th the fleet reached Portsmouth which Arnold proceeded to fortify, in order to establish it as a permanent post. He had been reinforced by three transports, and the troops under his command now amounted to two thousand. On the other hand, the four thousand militia were now collected; but, as economy was a material object, one fourth of these were dismissed. With the remainder, Steuben made the

proper arrangements to confine the enemy within the narrowest limits, and to give every practicable protection to the inhabitants.

General Lawson, with nine hundred militia and a party of horse, occupied several strong passes in the vicinity of Suffolk, a town lying about fifteen miles west of Portsmouth. Muhlenburg was stationed at Cabin Point, with Armand's corps and eight hundred infantry, to support Lawson. General Nelson, with one thousand foot and a small number of horse, occupied Williamsburg, to protect the stores at that place.

Baron Steuben's services during this predatory incursion of the enemy were fully appreciated by the State executive. The following is an extract from a letter of Governor Jefferson, dated the 10th of January, to the President of Congress. "Baron Steuben has descended from the dignity of his proper command to direct our smallest movements. His vigilance has in a great measure supplied the want of force, in preventing the enemy from crossing the river, the consequences of which might have been very fatal. He has been assiduously employed in preparing equipments for the militia, as they assembled, pointing them to a proper object, and in other offices of a good commander."

Nothing displays more strongly the ardent attachment of the Americans to the cause in which

they were engaged, than their detestation of the traitor Arnold, and the strong desire they manifested to get possession of his person. His conduct after the act of treason inflamed these feelings in no small degree. Hated by those whom he had betrayed, and an object of suspicion to the party he had joined, who never trusted him in command without placing him under the supervision of inferior officers, he embraced every opportunity, by acts of wanton cruelty and insult, to show the reckless nature of his feelings, and to sever the last tie, which bound him to his countrymen. Even Washington seems to have shared the general desire to seize the traitor, in a greater degree than was warranted by the real importance of the measure to the interests of the country. We hardly need to allude to the gallant attempt of Sergeant Champe to carry off Arnold from the midst of the British troops in New York. A similar project was set on foot about this time in Virginia.

It appears, that the plan was concerted between Jefferson and Baron Steuben. On the 31st of January, the former wrote to General Muhlenburg, urging the importance and feasibility of the plan, and requesting him to provide for its execution. "Having peculiar confidence in the men from the western side of the mountains," said he, "I meant, as soon as they should come down, to get

the enterprise proposed to a chosen number of them, such, whose courage and whose fidelity would be above all doubt. Your perfect knowledge of those men, personally, and my confidence in your discretion, induce me to ask you to pick from among them proper characters, in such numbers as you think best ; to reveal to them our desire ; and to engage them to seize and bring off this greatest of all traitors. Whether this may be best effected by their going in as friends, and awaiting their opportunity, or otherwise, is left to themselves. The smaller the number the better, so that they may be sufficient to manage him. Every necessary precaution on their part must be used, to prevent a discovery of their design by the enemy. I will undertake, if they are successful in bringing him off alive, that they shall receive five thousand guineas among them."

An order was enclosed from Baron Steuben, authorizing Muhlenburg to dispose what force he might think necessary, so as to cover the enterprise, and secure the retreat of the party. The bearer of the letter, who was privy to the plan, undertook to provide suitable men to act as guides.

The project unfortunately failed, owing to the extraordinary precautions which Arnold took for his own security. He remained close in his quarters while at Portsmouth, and never unguardedly exposed his person.

The invasion of the State caused a serious delay of the measures projected for furnishing General Greene with additional supplies. Much of the provision that had been collected was consumed, and many of the arms and stores were taken or destroyed. By a law of the State, no county was obliged to draft men for the Continental lines, while its militia were in actual service; and, as most of the militia from the lower counties were now in action, the recruiting operations were necessarily postponed. It was resolved, to send every regular soldier immediately to the Carolinas, and to trust the protection of the State against Arnold's force, entirely to the militia. Five hundred Continentals still remained at Chesterfield Court-House, but so destitute of clothing and other necessaries, that they could not act, even in their immediate vicinity.

In the mean time, Greene was making continual and pressing calls for support, representing the safety of all the southern states as dependent on the reception of supplies from Virginia. In his exertions to satisfy these demands, the Baron was sometimes unfortunate. Full of zeal himself, he could not perceive all the difficulties in the way of compliance with his requisitions, or allow for the natural reluctance of the Virginians to diminish their resources, when a portion of the territory was actually occupied by the British. The asper-

ity of some of his communications to the State authorities furnished many with a pretext for turning a deaf ear to claims, which they might otherwise have felt obliged to grant. Jefferson seems to have entered into Steuben's character, and feeling a deep respect for the man, to have exerted himself in lessening the difficulties of his situation. Greene and Washington both wrote in conciliatory terms to Steuben, to allay his irritation, and assure him of their confidence and support.

The double office of attending to the collection of supplies for the south, and directing the operations of the militia against Arnold, demanded incessant activity and vigilance. An accidental event at the north required Steuben to provide for more active operations.

Early in February a storm disabled the British fleet, which had hitherto blocked up the French vessels in Newport, and enabled M. Destouches to detach a sixty-four and two frigates, under M. de Tilly, to the Chesapeake, to act with the Virginia militia against Portsmouth. The capture of Arnold's naval force, it was hoped, would oblige his troops, cut off from all power of retreat, to surrender to Steuben. Unfortunately, Arnold received notice of the plan, and was able to draw his vessels so high up the Elizabeth river, that the shallowness of the water prevented the approach

of the French ; and M. de Tilly, having captured a British frigate and two privateers, returned, on the 24th of February, to Newport

The great importance of capturing Arnold, and dislodging the British from Virginia, induced Washington to press the French to a greater effort. Destouches finally determined to proceed with the whole squadron to the Chesapeake, with a body of eleven hundred French infantry on board. As Steuben had recently sent to General Greene a second detachment of regular troops, amounting to four hundred men, none but militia remained in the State, and these were deemed insufficient to act effectually with the French. A detachment of twelve hundred men from the main army, then stationed on the Hudson River, was therefore ordered to Virginia, under Lafayette, who was to command all the forces destined for the attack of Portsmouth.

The arrangements were made with great skill, and every thing seemed to promise success. Lafayette received positive orders to grant no terms to Arnold, which should insure him against the punishment due to his treason. By rapid marches, Lafayette reached the Head of Elk on the 3d of March, and there for a time awaited news from the French fleet. He wrote to Governor Jefferson and Steuben, urging the former to provide heavy ordnance and scows to transport them

across the rivers, and the latter to keep the British force constantly hemmed in by the militia. With the native delicacy of his character, he forbore to assume the command over Baron Steuben, until called to act immediately against the enemy.

The latter was again exposed to deep mortification from having relied too much on the promises of the State executive, and given to Lafayette too favorable an account of the supplies awaiting him in Virginia. In a letter to the Governor, dated the 9th of March, he wrote as follows. "In consequence of the assurances I received from government by Colonel Walker, I was weak enough to write to General Washington and the Marquis, that every thing was ready for the expedition. My credulity, however, is punished at the expense of my honor, and my only excuse is the confidence I had in government." The Marquis on his arrival was compelled to impress provisions and cattle, as the only means of providing for the army.

On the 20th of March, the hopes of all parties were excited to the highest pitch by the appearance in the bay of a fleet, conjectured to be that of the French. On the 23d they were doomed to learn the failure of these hopes, and the second escape of the prey, that seemed almost within their grasp. The vessels proved to be the English fleet under Arbuthnot, who had sailed from

New York two days after the departure of the French from Newport. The two fleets met near the entrance of the Chesapeake, and an action ensued, which, though indecisive in the main, induced Destouches to return, and the English vessels came up to Portsmouth. The troops under Lafayette gloomily retraced their steps to the northward, and Steuben returned to his old task, of watching the enemy, and forwarding supplies to General Greene.

Late in March, a reinforcement of two thousand English troops under General Phillips arrived at Portsmouth. As the magnitude of the British army now threatened the safety of the whole State, Lafayette received orders to take his force back, and assume the command in Virginia. His troops were wholly unprepared for a summer campaign at the south; but, by great exertions, and borrowing a large sum on his private credit from the merchants of Baltimore, they were put in tolerable trim.

Up to the middle of April, the enemy did nothing but send out small parties of Tories, under the direction of Arnold, who committed great excesses in the lower part of the State, plundering and burning the houses, and treating the inhabitants with wanton cruelty. On the 18th, a greater effort was made. Twenty-five hundred men under General Phillips sailed up James River, with the

view of attacking Petersburg and Richmond. Simcoe with a small party entered Williamsburg, and destroyed some stores. The main body, on the 24th, landed at the junction of the Appomatox and James Rivers, and marched up the banks of the former towards Petersburg.

Baron Steuben was there with one thousand militia, to defend the city against twenty-three hundred regular troops. But his measures were so well taken, that he was able to dispute the ground more than two hours, during which time the enemy gained but one mile. They were twice broken before their superiority of numbers compelled Steuben to retreat, and assume a new position about twelve miles up the river. The loss was equal, amounting to about sixty killed and wounded on each side.

General Lafayette by forced marches had arrived at Richmond, and his presence prevented the enemy from making any attack upon that place. But they burned all the tobacco in the warehouses in Petersburg and the vicinity, and destroyed several public armed vessels and much private property at other points on the river. A small flotilla, originally collected to aid the operations designed against Portsmouth, was now stationed at Warwick, a few miles below Richmond. Arnold conducted a considerable detachment of the British force against it and sent a flag to the commanding

officer, requiring him to surrender. A defiance was returned ; but, as the enemy were enabled to bring some heavy artillery to a point of the shore within cannon-shot, the Virginians were compelled, after scuttling the vessels and setting them on fire, to escape to the opposite bank.

By the 1st of May, Lafayette and Steuben had collected such a considerable force, that Phillips dared not cross to the northern side of the river, but, collecting his detached parties, commenced his voyage down to Portsmouth. His expedition had caused great loss to the Americans, though by the destruction of private, more than of public property. On the 5th, when below Burwell's Ferry, he received despatches from Cornwallis, announcing the intention of that officer to enter Virginia, and requesting Phillips to assume a position at Petersburg, in order to form a junction. The fleet in consequence again sailed up the river.

Lafayette had received the same news ; and, aware of the importance of preventing a union, took his measures with great celerity to occupy Petersburg. But he was anticipated by Phillips, who entered the town on the 9th, and made prisoners of two officers, who had been sent thither by the Marquis to provide boats for the passage of his army. Defeated in this object, Lafayette established his camp at Wilton, a few miles below Richmond, on the south side of the river.

On the 13th the command of the enemy again devolved on Arnold, by the death of General Phillips. This last was an old and skilful officer, but he caused the inhabitants of the country, through which he passed, to experience to the full the miseries of war. His communications to the American commanders were couched in such insolent terms, that both Lafayette and Steuben informed him, that, if his letters continued to be in such a spirit, all intercourse must cease.

The proposed union of the British forces took place on the 20th, at Petersburg. It enters not into the plan of this sketch, to give any connected account of the very successful manœuvres by which Lafayette, with inferior numbers, avoided every effort of Cornwallis, during the summer, to bring him to an engagement, and yet remained constantly in the vicinity of the enemy, confining his operations, and protecting the country against his detached parties. In all his movements, he was actively supported by Steuben.

The Baron was now so unpleasantly involved with the State authorities, that he ardently desired permission to leave this scene of action, and join Greene in the Carolinas. Leave was actually granted him for this purpose ; but the invasion by Cornwallis imperatively required his presence in Virginia, and he was obliged to remain.

At the Point of Fork, a tongue of land formed

by the junction of the Fluvanna and Rivanna rivers, the head branches of the James, a State arsenal had been established, and a quantity of military stores collected. The post was guarded by Baron Steuben, with six hundred newly levied troops. Cornwallis, learning his situation, despatched Simcoe against him with five hundred regulars. Tarleton, with two hundred and fifty horse, was also ordered to proceed to Charlottesville, and thence to join Simcoe at the Point of Fork.

This double movement rendered Steuben's situation very perilous. As the British commander secured every person he met on his route, and advanced with great haste, the Baron received only exaggerated accounts of the enemy's force, and was induced to think only of retreat. He transported the stores to the south side of the Fluvanna, and when Simcoe appeared, on the 3d of June, only thirty of the rear-guard remained exposed, who were captured. But as the river was deep and unfordable, and all the boats had been secured, the main object of the British was frustrated.

In this state of things, Simcoe had recourse to stratagem. He occupied the heights opposite to Steuben's new station, and by displaying his troops to advantage, and kindling many fires during the night, induced the Americans to believe,

that the main army, headed by Cornwallis, had arrived. Under this impression, the Baron broke up his camp in the night, and commenced a precipitate retreat, leaving behind him a considerable quantity of stores. These were destroyed by a small detachment, who crossed the river the next morning in a few canoes.

The Pennsylvania line, consisting of eight hundred men, under General Wayne, had been sent from the north, to assist in the defence of Virginia. Lafayette effected a junction with them on the 10th of June, and on the 16th he was joined by Steuben with his little band. The army now amounted to four thousand, of whom one half were regulars. Yet it was still far inferior in number to the British, and the Marquis could only hang on the rear of his opponent, who was now retreating to the low country.

A partial action took place near Jamestown, on the 6th of July, in which the enemy did not make the most of their advantage. Cornwallis seemed to lose his spirit of enterprise, and to bend his attention only to establishing a strong post, which might serve as a convenient station for the English fleet. York and Gloucester, on opposite sides of York river, were selected for this purpose, and the troops were employed in fortifying them during the month of August. Lafayette encamped in the neighbourhood, and made such disposition

of his strength, as to confine the enemy mainly within their works.

The autumn of this year was signalized by the march of the combined French and American army to Virginia, and the measures which led to the capitulation of Cornwallis, on the 18th of October. In the operations before York, Baron Steuben had a full and honorable share. Washington respected his indefatigable exertions, and soothed him under the disappointments he had suffered, by conferring upon him a command in the regular line. It was during the Baron's tour of duty in the trenches, that the negotiations for the surrender commenced. At the relieving hour the next morning, Lafayette approached with his division. The Baron refused to be relieved, assigning, as a reason, the etiquette in Europe, where the officer, who receives the overtures, remains on his post till the capitulation is signed or broken. The Marquis applied to the Commander-in-chief; but Steuben with his troops remained in the trenches, till the British flag was struck. Steuben was honorably noticed with other officers in the orders issued the day after the capitulation.

He returned with the main army to the northward, and continued at head-quarters till the close of the war, occupied in the discharge of his duties as inspector-general. Major North records, with much feeling, an incident, that occurred at this

time, and which displays the benevolence and warmth of feeling, that ever marked the amiable character of Steuben.

When the army left Virginia, North was ill of a fever, and could not be removed. On the eve of departure, the Baron visited him, to inform him, that he would be left behind, but in a country where he had found the door of every house open to the call of distress. "The instant you are able," said he, "quit this deleterious situation. There is my sulkey, and here," handing him a single piece of gold, "is half what I possess in the world. God bless you, I can say no more." We hardly know whether to admire more the feeling evinced in such an act, or the honest gratitude, which prompted the narrator of the anecdote to leave it on record.

Another of his aids relates a fact, still more illustrative of the Baron's generous character. On his passage to Virginia, he was annoyed by the wailing of a child in the fore part of the vessel. He sent to know the cause, and was told, that it proceeded from a little negro boy, who had been purchased in New York by a southern gentleman, and carried away from his parents. He instantly directed North to ascertain the amount of the purchase money, and actually paid it out of his own slender funds, and carried the boy back to the city. One day after his return, the gentleman

dined with him, and found him in great agitation. With tears in his eyes, the Baron informed him, that the boy had been fishing on a rock jutting into the River, and had unhappily fallen in, and was swept away by the tide. "I have been the cause of his death; if he had followed his own destiny, all would have been well."

In March, 1782, Baron Steuben introduced to Washington one of his former acquaintances, the Count de Bieniewsky.* He was cousin-german to Pulaski, and had recently arrived from France, with the intent to imitate his relative, in offering his services to Congress.

The wildest pages of romance hardly record stranger incidents, than those narrated of this celebrated adventurer. A Hungarian by birth, after becoming involved with the Emperor, and losing his estates in consequence, he entered the service of the Poles against the Russians. This was in the year 1768. After distinguishing himself in command by address and reckless bravery, in May of this year, he was dangerously wounded and

* This name was variously written by the Count himself. In his autograph letters to Washington it is written as in the text; but in other autograph letters, of a later period, it is spelled *Benyowzky*. In the published memoirs of his life we find it *Benyowsky*. A similar irregularity occurs in the name of Pulaski. The family name in Poland is *Pulawsky*; but in America he wrote his name *Pulaski*.

taken prisoner. In company with eighty other captives, he was thrown into a subterraneous prison, and the whole party were treated with such barbarity, that, in twenty days, thirty-five of their number perished. Remaining in prison more than a year, he was finally sent, with several others, into exile in Kamschatka.

On their arrival, Nilow, the governor, set them at liberty, and, with a trifling allowance from government, they were left to build huts in the vicinity of the town, and provide for themselves. The exiles formed themselves into a band, chose Bieniewsky for their captain, and swore eternal fidelity to each other. As the Count spoke several languages, he was finally admitted into the governor's family, to superintend the education of his three daughters. The youngest of these, Aphanasia, a beautiful girl only sixteen years of age, became ardently attached to him, and the mother finally consented to their marriage. But Bieniewsky was not in love, and, intending to use her interest only in effecting his escape, contrived to suspend the nuptials. She accidentally discovered his plot, and, fearful only of losing her lover, came in tears to entreat him not to leave her. He contrived to pacify and engage her to silence, and even to send him information, should the scheme reach the governor's ears. In a few days the signal was sent, that Nilow had taken the alarm. The Count,

with his sixty associates, immediately broke into the town, dispersed the soldiers, and gained possession of the fort and a corvette then lying in the harbour. The governor was killed in the struggle.

As the Cossacs surrounded the town and threatened an attack, the associates hastily embarked in the corvette, Aphanasia accompanying them, dressed in boy's clothes. They sailed in May, 1771. After a variety of adventures in the East Indies, the Count arrived in France the following year. He induced the French ministry to attempt forming a commercial establishment on the Island of Madagascar, and to appoint him as the governor. He remained two years on the island, and acquired such influence with several tribes of the natives, that they elected him to be their king. Becoming weary of his situation, he returned to France in 1776, and in 1782, came over to this country.

Such was the person, who now, through the medium of Steuben, laid his proposals before Congress. He offered to enlist and bring from Germany a legionary corps of four thousand men, to enter the service of the United States. A stipulated sum was to be paid to the Count, to cover the expenses of enlistment and transportation, another sum to be assigned as their monthly pay, and a tract of land to be granted, on which the officers and soldiers might settle at the close of the war.

The whole plan, drawn out with great minuteness, was delivered to Washington, who approved it, after suggesting some alterations, and it was then submitted to a committee of Congress, who reported in favor of its adoption. The total expenses fell far short of what was requisite to raise and support an equal number of native soldiers. But the immediate prospect of the termination of the war rendered the expediency of so vast a project doubtful, and, on this ground, the government finally rejected the proposals. The same scheme was then laid before the Virginia legislature, and rejected by that body for the same reason.

Bieniewsky finally contracted with some merchants of Baltimore to enter into trade with the natives of Madagascar. They furnished him with a ship, in which he returned to the island, and was soon afterwards slain by a party of Frenchmen, who destroyed his fort, and broke up the establishment. His wife accompanied him to America, and was in Baltimore at the time of his death.

In March, 1783, intelligence was received that the preliminary articles of peace had been signed, and the cessation of hostilities was proclaimed to the army on the 19th of April. The attention of Congress of course was turned to the disbanding of the army, but their first measures for this purpose caused alarm and discontent among the officers and men. Large arrearages of pay were due,

and all contemplated with dismay the prospect of returning penniless to their homes, after they had wasted their fortunes and their strength in the public service.

Baron Steuben sympathized fully with the distresses of others, when he had enough of private griefs to sustain. He had no home whither to retire ; he had sacrificed an independent income in Europe, and the poverty of the country, to which he had devoted his services, left him no prospect of obtaining adequate remuneration, and but a slender chance, when he was no longer needed as an officer, of securing even the means of subsistence. Yet his active benevolence constantly prompted him to share the little he possessed with others, whose necessities he deemed more pressing than his own.

On the day that the officers separated, the Baron's attention was directed to a Colonel Cochran, whose countenance showed marks of deep distress. Steuben said what he could to comfort him, but with little effect. "For myself," said Cochran, "I care not ; I can stand it. But my wife and daughters are in the garret of that wretched tavern. I know not where to carry them, nor have I the means for their removal." "Come," was the answer, "I will pay my respects to Mrs. Cochran and your daughters, if you please." Major North says, he followed the party

to the loft, and that, when the Baron left the unhappy family, he left hope with them, and all that he had to give.

In deference to the Baron's feelings and active habits, Washington employed him to the last moment in the service. In July of this year, he was recommended to Congress as a fit person to proceed to Canada, and claim from General Haldimand, the commander of that province, the delivery of the posts on the frontier. The Baron was appointed to the office, and instructed to obtain, if possible, immediate possession of the fortresses; and, if not, to procure assurances, that some time should be fixed for their delivery, and due notice given, that troops might be ready to occupy them on their evacuation by the English. He was further ordered to visit the several posts as far as Quebec, and to form an opinion of such as he should deem most expedient for the United States to retain and occupy.

In conformity with these instructions, Baron Steuben left the army, and arrived at Chamblee on the 2d of August. Thence he sent forward his aid-de-camp to Quebec, to announce the object of his mission. Haldimand was about departing to the upper country, and met Steuben at Sorel on the 8th of August. He informed the Baron, that ne had no orders to evacuate the posts, and did not feel authorized to enter into any nego-

tiations whatever. He even refused a request for passports to visit the posts, on the same ground of want of orders. Steuben was therefore obliged to return without attaining any of the objects of his mission.

On the day that Washington resigned his commission as Commander-in-chief, he wrote to Steuben, making full acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by him in the course of the war. As a proper testimonial of Steuben's merits in a military capacity, the letter is here inserted.

“Annapolis, 23 December, 1783.

“MY DEAR BARON,

“Although I have taken frequent opportunities, in public and private, of acknowledging your great zeal, attention, and abilities in performing the duties of your office ; yet I wish to make use of this last moment of my public life to signify, in the strongest terms, my entire approbation of your conduct, and to express my sense of the obligations the public is under to you for your faithful and meritorious services.

“I beg you will be convinced, my dear Sir, that I should rejoice if it could ever be in my power to serve you more essentially, than by expressions of regard and affection ; but, in the mean time, I am persuaded you will not be displeased with this farewell token of my sincere friendship and esteem for you.

“This is the last letter I shall write, while I continue in the service of my country. The hour of my resignation is fixed at twelve to-day ; after which, I shall become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac, where I shall be glad to embrace you, and testify the great esteem and consideration with which

“I am, my dear Baron, &c.,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.”

General Lincoln having resigned his place at the head of the war department, Baron Steuben and General Knox were the prominent candidates for the office of Secretary of War. The objection to the former, and it proved a decisive one, rested on the fact, that he was a foreigner ; and it was considered impolitic to trust such an important station to any other than a native citizen.

Of the personal qualifications of Baron Steuben for the desired office, there can be no reasonable doubt. In March, 1784, he submitted to Washington a plan for establishing a Continental legion, and training the militia in time of peace, which the latter returned with his entire approval.

“It was no unpleasing and flattering circumstance to me,” writes Washington in his reply, “to find such a coincidence of ideas as appears to run through your plan, and the one I had the

honor to lay before a committee of Congress in May last. Mine, however, was a hasty production, the consequence of a sudden call, and little time for arrangement; yours, of maturer thought and better digestion. It therefore meets my approbation, and has my best wishes for its success."

For seven years after the close of the war, Baron Steuben was occupied in ineffectual attempts to obtain from Congress the promised recompense for his services. Some provision was required for his support in the decline of life, and he had no other resource, than this claim on the justice as well as the gratitude of his adopted country. His demand was confined to a limit approved by Washington himself; "that if a foreigner gets nothing by the service, he ought not to lose by it."

We have seen, that by the agreement with Congress in 1777, he was entitled to a repayment of the money he had advanced for the voyage, and to an equivalent for the income he had resigned in Europe. The accumulated value at simple interest, of an income of five hundred and eighty guineas a year, which he enjoyed in Germany, and loans to the amount of two thousand guineas obtained from European friends to meet the expenses of his voyage hither, and the deficiency of his pay during the war, all amounted to

a large sum. The Baron stated it at ten thousand guineas, which was considerably below the calculated amount. This sum he asked of Congress as his due, but refused to take any thing as a gift, "nor would he accept of any thing but with general approbation."

Congress never expressly denied the justice of the claim, but their poverty at first induced delay, and in succeeding sessions the affair appeared stale, and was passed over with as little notice as possible. At one time they resolved to grant him seven thousand dollars in lieu of all demands. The Baron resented this proposal, considering it a virtual denial of the existence of any contract, and an impeachment of his veracity in respect to the statements he had made of his situation in Europe.

To put the former doubt at rest, he obtained the evidence of Dr. Witherspoon, the chairman of the committee with whom he conversed at Yorktown, who confirmed the statement of Baron Steuben in every particular. On the latter point, he collected a number of letters and papers, all tending to show, that he was not a needy adventurer, which some had insinuated, nor yet a pensioner of France. He submitted his statement, and the accompanying proofs, to Mr. Jay, Mr. Livingston, Colonel Hamilton, and others, all of

whom declared the evidence to be satisfactory, and the demand to be fully supported. Yet Congress examined the papers and did nothing.

Nor was it till after the settlement of the Federal constitution, that the urgent recommendation of the President, and the exertions of Hamilton, procured for Steuben tardy and imperfect justice. On the 4th of June, 1790, Congress passed an act, granting to the veteran a life annuity of twenty-five hundred dollars. Individual States had already shown their sense of Baron Steuben's ill-requited services by complimentary resolutions and gifts of land. Virginia and New Jersey had each given a small tract of land, and the Assembly of New York, by a vote dated May 5th, 1786, made over to him one quarter of a township, equal to sixteen thousand acres, out of the territory recently purchased from the Oneida Indians. The site selected was in the immediate vicinity of Utica.

Upon this land Steuben caused a log house to be erected, which was designed as the home of his declining years. He had no kindred in the country, and his family consisted only of dependents and friends, whom his various acts of kindness had caused to cling to him with all the affection of children for an aged parent. He distributed nearly a tenth part of the tract to his aids and

servants, and the rest of the land was let on easy terms to twenty or thirty tenants. About sixty acres were cleared in front of the house, and afforded him wheat and nourishment for a small stock of cattle.

As the surrounding country was thinly settled, a desire for society led him to pass a portion of each winter in the city of New York. Here he met his former associates, lectured his old and new friends on military tactics and discipline, and told stories of the wars. Attached to the customs of his native land, he sometimes surprised his guests by dishes dressed in the true German style. At one time, a gentleman who dined with him remembers, that there was served up a magnificent boar's head, boiled in wine, the Baron apologizing, that he had not the kind of wine appropriate to the dish.

He was never perfectly a master of the English language, though he made few mistakes in speaking, except as a matter of jest. Once, when dining with the Commander-in-chief, Mrs. Washington asked him what amusements he had, now that the business of his office was less pressing. "I read and play chess, my lady," said the Baron; "and yesterday I was invited to go a fishing. It was understood to be a very fine amusement. I sat in the boat two hours, though it was very warm, and

caught two fish." "Of what kind, Baron," asked the lady. "Indeed, I do not recollect perfectly, but one of them was a whale." "A whale, Baron! in the North River!" "Yes, on my word; a very fine whale, as that gentleman informed me. Did you not tell me it was a whale, Major?" "An eel, Baron." "I beg your pardon, my lady; but the gentleman certainly called it a whale. But it is of little consequence. I shall abandon the trade, notwithstanding the fine amusement it affords."

At his house near Utica, the Baron had little society, except from the passing visit of a stranger or friend. A young man, named Mulligan, whose literary powers and destitute situation, when a boy, had attracted his notice, resided with him, and read to him in his solitary hours. His favorite aids-de-camp, Walker and North, also spent much time at his house, and their affectionate attention continued to cheer him till the close of life.

His farm and garden afforded him some amusement, but it was chiefly from a well-stored library that he derived relief from the weariness of a situation, that harmonized ill with the active duties of his former life.

Nor was he deprived of the consolations of religion. A full belief in Christianity, and frequent perusal of the Scriptures, calmed his life-worn

feelings, and prepared him to meet his end with composure and humble trust.

Though the sedentary life he followed was unfavorable to his health, no failure of mind or body was apparent till November, 1794. On the 25th of that month, he retired in the evening to his chamber in his usual health, but was shortly after struck with paralysis, and partly deprived of speech. The nearest physician was called, though the case was immediately seen to be hopeless. He died on the 28th.

Agreeably to former directions, his body was wrapped in a military cloak, ornamented with the star which he had always worn, and interred in the neighboring forest. A few neighbors, his servants, and the young man, his late companion, followed his remains to the grave.

Though the place of interment was in a thick wood, a public highway was laid out some years afterwards, which passed directly over the hallowed spot. Walker caused the body to be taken up, and reinterred at a little distance, where a monument was erected and enclosed with an iron paling. He also gave an adjoining lot of land as a site for a church, on condition that the members and their successors should preserve the remains from any future violation.

Colonel North caused a tablet, with the following inscription, to be placed in the Lutheran

church in Nassau Street, New York, where the Baron used to worship, when residing in the city

Sacred to the Memory of
Frederic William Augustus, Baron Steuben,
A German Knight of the Order of Fidelity,
Aid-de-camp to Frederic the Great, King of Prussia,
Major-General and Inspector-General
In the Revolutionary war.
Esteemed, respected, and supported by Washington,
He gave military Skill and Discipline
To the Citizen Soldiers, who,
(Fulfilling the Decrees of Heaven,)
Achieved the Independence of the United States.
The highly polished Manners of the Baron were graced
By the most noble Feelings of the Heart ;
His Hand, open as Day to melting Charity,
Closed only in the Grasp of Death.

This Memorial is inscribed by an American,
Who had the Honor to be his Aid-de-camp,
The Happiness to be his Friend.
Ob. 1795.*

Baron Steuben left an only brother, who resided at Treptow, on the Baltic, in Pomerania. He wrote to Washington in September, 1796, to inquire respecting the distribution of his brother's fortune. In reply, he was informed, that, with the exception of the library and one thousand dollars,

* A mistake. The true date has been given before.

bequeathed to Mulligan, and certain small legacies, the Baron had divided his property between his two aids-de-camp. "If the fortune of Baron Steuben," added Washington, "had been as ample as his heart was benevolent, none of his friends would have been omitted in the disposition of his will."

The character of Steuben is apparent in the simple record of his life. No great discernment is required to seize its prominent traits, nor any nice touches to describe its plain and manly features. Educated in the school of war, the best in Europe before the time of Napoleon, approved and trusted by the great Frederic, his services to his adopted country were invaluable. By imparting discipline, he gave confidence to the officers and men, and enabled the troops from different parts of the country to act together with unanimity and effect. By introducing military habits of strict obedience, he suppressed tumult and disorder; and, by his rigid system of inspection, great sums were saved at a time when the very existence of the nation depended on economy in the army. Circumstances unfitted him for a separate command. Though able, perhaps, to lead regular troops, he could not successfully direct the operations of militia. Bred under a monarch, whose slightest word was law, and accustomed to the complete subordination of the civil to the military rule, he was frequently brought into unpleasant

collision with the people and the State authorities. Washington at once discerned his proper station, and, by placing him at the head of the department of inspection, secured to the army the utmost benefit from his peculiar abilities.

Warm-hearted, affectionate, generous to the extreme, the soldiers loved him, and many officers regarded him with romantic attachment. Meanness he could not comprehend, and want of fidelity to engagements he abhorred. His warmth of temper sometimes involved him in difficulties; but, as he could not retain anger himself, others were unable to be permanently offended with him. He was prompt to acknowledge a mistake, and eager to make reparation wherever it was due. In his manners he was formal, and he had high notions of the respect due to military rank; but the friends, whom his active benevolence had secured, were never estranged even by apparent coldness of demeanor. His disinterested services, imperfectly requited in his lifetime, should be the longer remembered by the people, to the establishment of whose liberties they were devoted.

THE END.



